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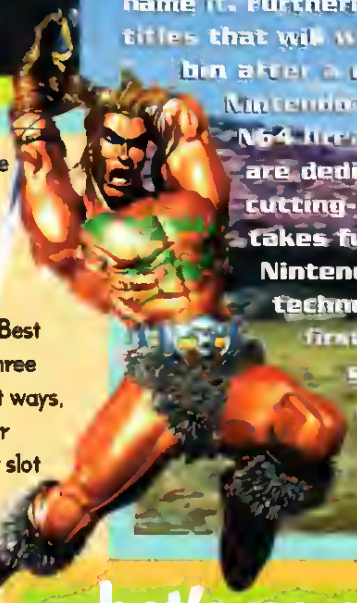
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, START YOUR EYEBALLS

The waiting is over. Nintendo 64® is finally here, on the shelf, waiting for you to snatch it up. But what's the big deal, you're probably asking yourself. It took long enough. Was the wait worth it? You bet, and here's why.

SO MANY



If you're going to invest your hard-earned (or mooched) cash in a video game system, you want to be sure you can play plenty of great games on it. Not an issue. There are over 50 titles in development for N64 covering all gaming categories, from action to role-playing, sports, fighting, simulation, puzzles, you name it. Furthermore, these are not titles that will wind up in the bargain bin after a month, because Nintendo and the exclusive N64 Dream Team developers are dedicated to producing cutting-edge software that takes full advantage of the Nintendo 64's incredible technology. A few of the first wave of titles include Super Mario 64™, PilotWings 64™, Wave Race 64™, Killer Instinct Gold,



The Nintendo 64 controller is the most revolutionary video game interaction device ever. It all starts with the analog Control Stick. Unlike the traditional all-or-nothing digital Control Pad (it's got one of those too), the analog Control Stick is sensitive to even the slightest movement. Move it a little to make Mario tiptoe. Crank on it and watch him take off in a full-tilt sprint. Best of all the Control Stick gives you 360 degrees of control. The three grips on the controller let you hold the controller three different ways, depending on what works best for the game you are playing. For saving your records and high scores, the controller has a handy slot for your personal Memory Pak. Now when you go to your friend's house for some multi-player action, you can bring all your personal data with you, snug inside your favorite color controller (it comes in six stylin' colors).



finally you have control

what's up our sleeve.

It gets better. Most new gaming technology looks cool when it first comes out, but by the time you get it home, something bigger and badder is on the way. Fortunately, the Nintendo 64 was designed with maximum capability for future upgrades in mind. Four controller ports mean four-player gaming from the get-go. Expansion ports allow for more system RAM and new peripherals (can you say readable-writable storage media?). The bottom line: The Nintendo 64 is currently the most advanced video game system ever, and it is the only system that is designed to change with technology.

GAMES... SO FEW THUMBS.









Super Mario Kart R™, Wayne Gretzky's 3-D Hockey™ and *Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire™*. Most importantly, these and the many other titles on the way all must meet Nintendo's high standards of fun and quality before they hit the shelf. What more do you need to know about the Nintendo 64 software library beyond that?

NINTENDO 64 SPORTS™

¿hablas N64?

Anti-aliasing Makes great transparency effects. For example, objects seen through water look different than objects seen through air. **CPU** Central processing unit. 64 bits means fast and powerful. **Reality Co-processor** The heart and soul of the N64. A 64-bit custom chip from Silicon Graphics that performs all graphics and audio processing. **Trilinear MIP-map interpolation** Subtly blends colors and patterns of texture maps to make objects more realistic even as they move closer to you. **Microcode** Custom CPU control instructions optimized for audio, lighting, graphic details and other ultrarealistic effects. **Texture mapping** Puts a bitmapped picture or texture onto a surface. In other words, a brick wall looks like a brick wall, not like a blank one. **Wavetable synthesis** Dynamic high-fidelity sounds. Found in pricey multimedia PCs. **Z-Buffer** Keeps stuff in the right place even if you're moving quickly. Objects maintain their true spatial relationships.



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NOVEMBER 1996

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THE STUNNING 16-BIT FINALE

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PLAYSTATION:
RESIDENT EVIL 2
OVERKILL
CONTRA
TEMPEST X
FINAL DOOM
FORMULA 1

SATURN:
DARK SAVIOR
AMOK
POWERSLAVE
SF ALPHA 2
FIGHTING VIPERS

NINTENDO 64:
SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE
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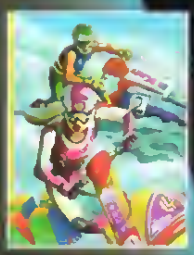
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COVER STORY

TAKE TO THE OPEN OCEAN AND FEEL THE WAVES RACE!

GAMEFAN original art by:



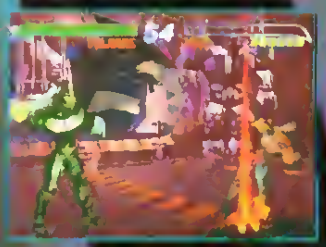
TERRY WOLFINGER
Nice to have you back doin the cover "T"



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TEN THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO PLAY IN THE NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE.

1. If you dislocote something, put it bock.
2. Kickers oren't footboll ployers. They're kickers.
2. If referees could see everything, instont reploy wouldn't be on issue.
4. Don't let your center eat chili at pre-game meals.
5. If you get injured for o gome, dress posh for the sidelines.
4. The only thing thot con move an offensive linesman is o defensive linesmon.
7. Ahead by one, go for two. Ahead by two, go for one.
4. End zone breok-donce moves olwoys make the highlights.
9. Astroturf is excellent for miniature golf courses.
10. Ronnie Lott retired.

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A METROPOLIS PUBLICATION



For once all is quite. There are no wars to fight, no mysterious hardware lurking in the shadows, and no major industry shake-ups to speak of. Of course, this will likely change by the time you read this, but I'll enjoy it anyway, while it lasts. By the time you read this, the Nintendo 64 will have launched so you could probably care less anyway. Mario beckons... While we're on the subject, wait 'til you get a load of this month's cover story, *WaveRace*. This gem redefines home racing games as we know them with the most realistic physics ever displayed in a video game. The Nintendo 64 will no doubt come out of the gate smokin'. I hope the software flows fast enough to meet the demand. You'll also find two more revolutionary racers in this month's issue, *Wipeout XL*, and *Formula 1*. Though on opposite sides of the spectrum both provide the player an out-of-body experience. This month's *Star Wars Shadows of the Empire* coverage features a behind-the-scenes interview at LucasArts and a journey to the Saturn Sector will reveal the re-emergence of Scavenger. There's even some hot 16-bit stuff in here. It's a packed issue. I'll go away now.



SLICING THROUGH THE THIRD DIMENSION...



...NOVEMBER 1996

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TOP TEN MOST WANTED

READERS' TOP TEN

1. *Resident Evil* - PS
2. *Super Mario RPG* - SNES
3. *Street Fighter Alpha* - PS
4. *Virtua Fighter 2* - Saturn
5. *Tekken 2* - Arcade
6. *Killer Instinct 2* - Arcade
7. *Panzer Zwei* - Saturn
8. *Chrono Trigger* - SNES
9. *Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3* - PS
10. *DK Country 2* - SNES



READERS' MOST WANTED

1. *Super Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
2. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
3. *NiGHTS* - Saturn
4. *Virtua Fighter 3* - Arcade
5. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
6. *SF Alpha 2* - PS/Saturn
7. *Zelda*[64] - Nintendo[64]
8. *Pilot Wings 64* - Nintendo[64]
9. *KI Gold* - Nintendo[64]
10. *MK Trilogy* - Nintendo[64]



DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

This Month's Guests:

Mike Dietz & Doug TenNapel
The Neverhood

1. *Mean Bean Machine* - Genesis
2. *Tekken 2* - PS
3. *Virtua Fighter* - Saturn
4. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
5. *Vectorman* - Genesis
6. *Gunstar Heroes* - Genesis
7. *Toe Jam & Earl 2* - Genesis
8. *Super Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
9. *Namco Museum* - PS
10. *Wipeout* - PS

GF EDITORS' TOP TEN

1. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
2. *Waverace*[64] - Nintendo[64]
3. *Arnok* - Saturn
4. *Wipeout XL* - PS
5. *F1* - PS
6. *Nanotek Warrior* - PS
7. *Fighting Vipers* - Saturn (Import)
8. *Legacy of Kain* - PS
9. *Overkill* - PS
10. *Contra* - PS



1. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
2. *Policenauts* - PS
3. *Wave Race*[64] - Nintendo[64]
4. *Fighting Vipers* - Saturn
5. *Tobal No. 1* - PS
6. *Dark Savior* - Saturn
7. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
8. *Tactics Ogra* - Super Famicom
9. *Star Ocean* - Super Famicom
10. *SF Alpha 2* - Saturn



1. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
2. *SF Alpha 2* - PS
3. *Tan Pin Aliay* - PS
4. *Resident Evil* - PS
5. *Samurai Showdown 2* - Neo•Geo
6. *Puyo Puyo Tsu* - Saturn
7. *KOF '95* - Saturn
8. *F1* - PS
9. *Final Fantasy III* - SNES
10. *Phantasy Star I* - SMS



1. *Policenauts* - PS
2. *Fighting Vipers* - Saturn
3. *Deception* - PS
4. *NiGHTS* - Saturn
5. *Popolocrois* - PS
6. *Virtua Fighter Kids* - Saturn
7. *Star Ocean* - Super Famicom
8. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
9. *KOF '96* - Neo•Geo
10. *Albert Odyssey* - Saturn



1. *Wave Race*[64] - Nintendo[64]
2. *Shadows of the Empire* - PS
3. *Wipeout XL* - PS
4. *Final Doom* - PS
5. *Super Mario*[64] - Nintendo[64]
6. *Pilotwings*[64] - Nintendo[64]
7. *Tekken 2* - PS
8. *Powerslave* - Saturn
9. *Deception* - PS
10. *Star Gladiators* - PS



1. *Nights* - Saturn
2. *Dark Savior* - Saturn
3. *Wave Race*[64] - Nintendo[64]
4. *SF Alpha 2* - Saturn
5. *Crash Bandicoot* - PS
6. *Fighting Vipers* - Saturn
7. *Three Dirty Dwarves* - Saturn
8. *VF Kids* - Saturn
9. *Madden '97* - PS/Saturn
10. *CoolBoarders* - PS



WIN THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

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Congratulations

to last month's winners:

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David Maag, Sacramento, CA

Second Prize:
Leonard Morency, E. Elmhurst, NY

Third Prize:
Bryan Birchfield, Lakewood, CO

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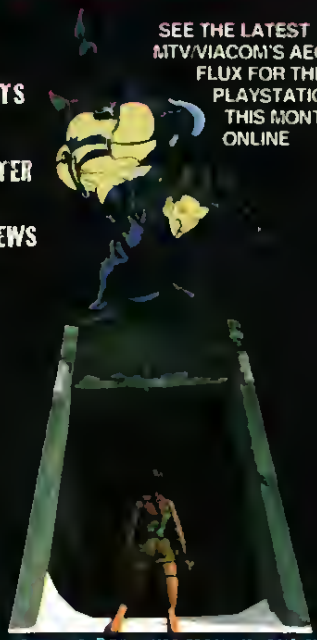


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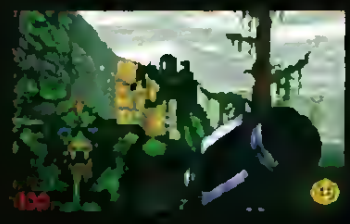
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about running
with sharp
objects



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VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality







WAVERACE 64
NINTENDO 64
NINTENDO-CART
RACING/STUNTS

WaveRace is trely en event among reciag gamaa. Naver balore heve i experieaced such responsive gameplcy. This watar is reei. It reacis exactly as it ehould to every situalion. Rsmerkahie. The texteres are gorgeous, music... do-eble, end the game's plenty deep. This is yet another N64 geme that wiii truly change ihings. Waich the copycats scramble aad ieii, tece first. Yoe cen't touch this on eny other consoie.

G 9 C 10 P 7 M 9 O 8 **95**



I'm not e hig fan of racing games, bet evsn I cae appreciate the exceilsnt play mechaeics in this one. The geme coetrols greet, and Nintendo'e hidden lots of secret tracks and meeeevers to heep it isteresting entil the eext good N64 title hits. The cherectare ere a hit cheeky, eed the music ie from the same pli that spawned *Pilotwings*' soeedtrach, bet otherwise, *WaveRace* excels.

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 4 O 7 **94**



Gecing perfection courtesy ol Miyamoto. Gemember when you first plegged in *F-Zero*, many meces ago? You'll be teeling thal same elatice ecen enough, believe me! These deys, there's e lot more quality racing tiles areand, but *WaveRace* exrpasses every single one of them. From the incredible water effects, the hege nember of coerses, perfect computer AI and fens-tlered eensels, this'll have you crying out for joy, and thonking yner pereonal orenipotent heing tor creating that genies Miyamoto. Another astonishing piece ol work you'll retern to in years to come...

G 10 C 10 P 10 M 9 O 10 **99**





STAR GLADIATOR
PLAYSTATION
CAPCOM-CD
FIGHTING

Capcom's first foray into 3D fighters isn't bad at all. Though not a hit in the arcades, this game will be much more popular on the PlayStation due to those impressive visuals and simple command system. Anyone can get to grips with this game, which probably explains why it bombed so badly in the arcades. Expect *Street Fighter* style strategy or two million combo variations and you'll be disappointed. Whatever you may think of *SG*, you must check out the graphics. They are the best yet seen on a console fighting game, beating even *Tekken 2*!

G 10 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **88**



Capcom has spent long enough in the 2D arena; and fortunately they've delivered an astounding first effort in the 3D fighting pit. The introduction is of *Tekken 2* standard, and while the action is distinctly *Soul Edged* (characters move at 30fps and weapons are motion blurred), there's a whole new set of rules to learn here. No overbalanced characters, special attacks and combo chains aplenty and a huge cyber-samurai to face ensure that PlayStation owners have a polygon fighter that stomps all over the *Toshinden*s of this world from a great height. And those backgrounds... prepare to be amazed!

G 10 C 10 P 8 M 8 O 8 **96**



Whee! Let's dance in the streets... finally, a 3-D fighting game from Capcom! They've finally acknowledged that 3-D is the only place to be... death to 2-D! Uh, yeah. Sorry if I seem a little bitter about this one. If it played like a real fighting game I wouldn't be so miffed. For the 2-D Capcom fighting freak this game plays terribly, with a connect-the-dots combo system and a block button. The graphics and music, however, are beautiful. *SG* is simply the best-looking texture-mapped PS fighter. If you're a casual fighting game player, you can't go wrong.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **80**





TOBAL NO. 1
PLAYSTATION
SQUARE-CD
FIGHTING

A triumphant beginning to Square's surge onto the 32-bit consoles, as they deliver a supremely playable beat-'em-up with a huge dollop of questing on the side. Movement is motion-captured beauty, the introduction is astounding, the play mechanics are new, interesting and deep; meaning you'll be learning a whole new set of techniques never seen in a fighting game before. The character's aren't to my personal taste (muscular chickens? Er... not for me.), but hey, when you've got fantastic playability oozing from your PlayStation, who cares?

G 8 C 10 P 9 M 8 O 8 **94**



I wasn't too impressed with *Tobal No. 1*, putting me in the minority here at GameFan. I do respect the way Dream Factory tried to completely reinvent the genre, but the gameplay seems to plodding, slow, and deliberate, nowhere near as satisfying as *Tekken* or *VF*. The quest mode is cool, and the soundtrack and backgrounds are definitely awesome, but it's hard to get too excited about this one.

G 8 C 7 P 8 M 8 O 8 **88**



Simply unbelievable! If this game had come from Sega or Namco, I would understand... but no, then we wouldn't have the Akira Toriyama characters and sparkling music courtesy of *Chrono Trigger* composer Yasunori Mitsuda. If you're searching for that 100% all-new fighting game experience look no further... as an original home fighting game, I could not possibly give this higher recommendation. If you know what's good for you, get *Tobal*!

G 10 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 10 **98**





OVERKILL
PLAYSTATION
SONY-CD
ACTION/ADVENTURE

Until the final version arrived I wasn't sure whether Konami had hit the big time with their first non-Japanese PS action/adventure. I'm now convinced they have. *Overkill* is not only finely tuned and balanced, but a godsend for those fond of extended play. You will get every dime out of this purchase. Hot rendered graphics, crazy transparencies, burnin' music. Another fine Konami effort.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **89**



Music that changes with the action is a great idea, and I'd love to see it used more often. I found myself thinking of *Overkill* as a sort of 2D *Doom*. Graphically, the characters are highly detailed and animated, explosions are real, and each locale is an exercise in transparencies. The most vivid quality, however, next to the high strategy, is the fluid way in which stuff dies. You've never seen anything like it.

G 8 C 7 P 8 M 8 O 8 **86**



Bring on one of the longest, toughest, most violent shooters ever! Packed with a whopping 40+ levels of blasting carnage, 4 psycho characters, killer weapons, and hordes of fodder to blow away, *Overkill* is one insane mission after another. The graphics are a little dark for my tastes, but every scrap of art is high on detail. If action shooters are your element, and you don't mind the learning curve and heavy dose of strategy, *Project Overkill* is your game.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **83**





SPOT
PLAYSTATION
VIRGIN-CD
ISOMETRIC ACTION

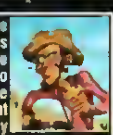
Spot Goes to Hollywood is e gorgeces game. it's packed with more art thoo eey other twe, end is brimming with high quality aaimatioa. The FMV is beyoad description. Oaca yau get pessed tha iao-controi, which you caa adjust, you'ii ba lovin' thia aimplistic yat satistying actioo hopper. Tommy T'a aouadtrack adds ae eir of aophistication io ihs whota advenoure. Tha tirst PS iao-actioaer is e winnert

G 9 C 9 P 7 M 10 O 9 **85**



The game that would never be released is finally here, and perhaps the delay was a little too severe. The CG pre-rendered quality is second to none and there's plenty to find in the actual game, but this title (even at this hideously late stage) seriously lacks control; the most important point to consider when formulating a game. The isometric nature means that Spot jumps into and out of the screen while remaining the same size; meaning you can't judge distances at all; an infuriating problem that mars an otherwise slick but run-of-the-mill release. I'd personally hug a bandicoot instead...

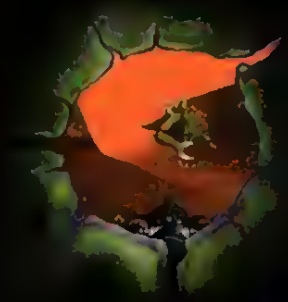
G 9 C 5 P 9 M 7 O 7 **72**



I really hed gottsn to e polat where I thought 32-bit *Spot* wes OOA, so it's good to see that he tiaelly got his chance. Boih the hend-drawn characters aad rendered bachgroends ere ot the utmost quaiity, end the music is supsrb. Tha disappointmeni was in tinally receiving the game; atter the long weit, I ioend *Spot* io ba much too average in many instences. A quelity actioa game, just not the spectacle I wes hopiag tor.

G 9 C 7 P 9 M 9 O 9 **79**



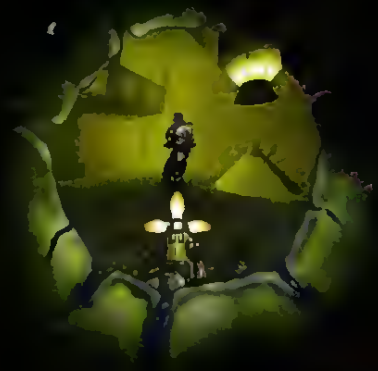




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FLOATING RUNNER
PLAYSTATION
XING-CD
3D ACTION PLATFORM

Thia wes e really cool game e yeer ago whea it came oui in Japaa. 32-bii was still reistively new ehd no 3D platformers were available. Now however, we've seen whai tha PS caa do and ao, *Floating Runner* seems less of a game. It's still pretty cool ihough – limited, but cooi. Platform gamers will enjoy its vest areas, high-res graphics and chock iuii o' hoppin' gamaplay. I jusi wish tha camara looked oui e little further.

G 7 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 8 **70**

Two words describe 1: Too late. While this game was somewhai (well, not really...) impressive many months ago, the advent of *Mario* and *Crash* render it eseless. If yoe want a charming lil' adventure, perhaps... bet I, personally, jest do not care.

G 8 C 5 P 5 M 8 O 6 **65**

I eppreciate Xing's effempt lest yeer at giving starved PS pleyere over in Japen a 3D pletforming experience. Here in the U.S. however, we ere 2nd in line and heving played gemes that far surpass *FR* by now, a little of the initiel luster la gone. *Floating Runner* is like a 32-bit clas-sic. Good gameplay, last year's graphics. It's still has its moments though and remains a unique, albeit tlet-sheded experience.

G 7 C 8 P 5 M 7 O 7 **72**



BLACK DAWN
PLAYSTATION
PLAYMATES-CD
AERIAL COMBAT

As far as heli games go (and they usually don't go very far with me), *Black Dawn* is at the top of my list. The gameplay is big on changing altitude constantly and blasting away at ground and air targets. The t-mapped, polygonal enemy and allied forces look splendid and the game's sound-track is beyond great. It's not very realistic (planes fly slow and collisions do not cause "game over"), but if a game like this was, it'd be nearly unplayable... like those true simulations... that I hate! Hot game. The chief's wrong!

G 9 C 9 P 8 M 9 O 7 **85**

Despite small clipping problems, *Black Dawn's* 3D environments are very impressive. The choppers and planes are super-detailed, and the explosions are wicked. The intensity level is set on high, with swarms of planes and choppers flying madly about your vessel. Luckily the flight controls and weapons selection are perfect, seeing as how most missions involve beth rescuing (*Choplifter* style) and dogfight shooting. The soundtrack is motion-picture quality Tallarico at his finest and heightens the gameplay experience immeasurably.

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 9 O 9 **80**

I hate to complain when I'm look-ing at such a quality game, but can someone talk to me about this whole fog system? It doesn't take from the game, which is more a pure shooter than a, dare I say... nah! No matter, there's plenty of military jar-gon for you warrin' types. The music is straight out of the movies and I really like the light sourcing. I do wish certain enemies moved along faster but I'll live... and they won't!

G 9 C 9 P 7 M 9 O 9 **79**



TIME COMMANDO
PLAYSTATION
ACTIVISION-CD
ACTION/ADVENTURE

Time Commando looks good but the gameplay is an exercise in pain. The word cumbersome comes to mind and sticks like crazy glue the whole time you're playing. Take these pre-rendered stiffoids and put them out to pasture. The FMV bgs are nicely detailed but move along at a shudderingly slow pace and the whole game just screams why bother. I will say this, how-ever: That intro is one hot piece of work!

G 7 C 4 P 5 M 7 O 5 **58**

A little work and this could have been really good, which is the depressing part. I like the con-cept, I like the angle, if only the engine had been tuned. It's not that it's unplayable, it just takes so much determination to stick through it. I did appreciate the diversity of the characters, all of which are nicely detailed, and each time period and its accompanying weapons were done with style.

G 9 C 9 P 7 M 7 O 7 **70**

I love the whole concept of *Time Commando*, but I think it needs a sequel with major refinements to find an audience. The whole scrolling, pre-rendered background idea is hot, and so too is the story-line of time traveling in cyberspace, but unfortu-nately the play mechanics crush all hope for the game. The slo-mo play control, awful response time, and erred collisions literally drop this game from great to below average. Too bad, because so much more could have been done.

G 9 C 4 P 7 M 7 O 9 **69**



ANDRETTI RACING
PLAYSTATION
EA-CD
RACING

A licensed racing game... that's good? Wow, Mario himself must have helped tweak *AR* because it definite-ly is a good racer. If realism is your thing, not to mention the diversity provided by two circuits, this is your game. Clipping is at a min-imum, the control and the cameras are done just right and the options read like an operator's manual. Impressive!

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 7 **79**

Unfortunately *Andretti* finds itself smack dab in the midst of *F1*. I realize they're two different games, *Andretti* being the national racer, and *F1* the world circuit racer, but to gamers they're both racing games. *Andretti* is cool because it offers both the Indy and Stock car cir-cuits, with well over a dozen tracks for each, and goes the extra mile by including various car modifications. The control is very smooth and the many cameras views are hot. Although sec-ond to *F1*, *Andretti's* one of the best around.

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 9 O 9 **86**

Andretti is the first solid racing experience from EA for the PlayStation. A wide variety of options, a plethora of camera angles, tight control and good music set the stage for one of the more diverse racers around. All 24 tracks offer lush scenery and little to no clipping. So, what happened with *Road Rash*?

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 7 **79**



F1
PLAYSTATION
PSYGNOSIS-CD
RACING

Visions of spending days on end parked in front of the tube sound good? Well, Psygnosis certainly has the game for such an occasion. *F1* is without a doubt the finest F1 game ever created for a home console. From the amazing tunes of Joe Satriani (well, he did do the title track) to the accu-racy down to the nose hair, this is as real as racing gets. Track conditions, weather, tires, aerodynam-ics, you name and it figures into the winning equa-tion. Heck, if the driver had a cold that day, the game would probably sneeze. Amazing.

G 9 C 9 P 10 M 9 O 9 **95**

The UK's finest developers now bring you an astonishingly accurate simulation of 1995's F1 season. From the hoardings to the scenery, the car physics to the bril-liant lack of pop-up, this shines through as a faber of love that should be nestling in your PlayStation collection. This isn't just faberous foaming of nowtes and 60+ lap races (unless you want it to be!); there's an arcade mode where running other cars off the track becomes second-natural. With all 17 courses featured here and more options than you could ever hope to need, you've got a sure-fire winner on your hands. Now hand me that joy-pad; Shumacher's going down this time...

G 9 C 10 P 7 M 10 O 9 **95**

To put it simply, Psygnosis have cre-ated a masterpiece with *Formula 1*. In terms of playability and depth no other racing game even comes close. *F1* combines the speed and excitement of an arcade style racer with the skill and strategy of a full-blown Grand Prix competition. Add to that a humongous number of tracks and options that should ensure plenty of late nights for months to come. If anything, *F1* is so realistic it may actual-ly prove to be to daunting for younger gamers. Definitely one for hard-core racing enthusiasts.

G 10 C 10 P 9 M 9 O 9 **94**



STEEL HARBINGER
PLAYSTATION
MINDSCAPE-CD
ACTION/ADVENTURE

I was hoping *Steel Harbinger* would come together a little better in its final stages but I still find tha game very playable and worth your time. Miranda's animation is sore-ly lacking with two frames on her jump, but the vast areas, search and destroy missions and cool lighting help save tha day. *Steel H.* wins my award for cheesiest FMV intro however, with such as obviously staged produc-tion you'll be holding back the laughter. Check tha FMV Miranda, and jut it out!

G 7 C 7 P 7 M 8 O 8 **76**

Steel Harbinger sent my heart a-racin'. I really like the shapely lead, Miranda. The game itself plays very well and has huge areas for you to explore as you reign terror on the aliens who've taken your humanity from you. Light sourcing abounds as you lay waste to all. The music's good, too. Mindscape's best game is right here.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 8 O 8 **80**

Thia engine is pretty efficient, offering fluid 360° movement, and mesks eny would be clip-ping very convincingly. I found some collision woes here and there but for the most part, the gameplay is solid-seek and-destroy. Visually, *SH* has a lot going for it. Las Vegas especially caught my eye with its blinding neon lights. I found the FMV pleas-antly B-movie-like and appreciate its near-broadcast quality. *SH* is a game I'd buy.

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 8 **82**

They learned everything from their parents.. Except respect..



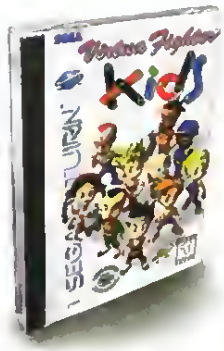
The next Virtua Fighter generation has been born. Trouble is, somebody forgot to teach them how to be nice little boys and girls. These kids kick. They smash. They nail combinations their VF parents can't, and would probably never approve of. But don't worry. The only spankings in this game will come in the form of well-placed body slams. And when it's all over, you'll have the privilege of saying you slapped around some pint-sized punk.

Virtua Fighter Kids

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TEMPEST X
PLAYSTATION
INTERPLAY-CD
SHOOTING

Take *Tempest 2000* from the extinct Jag, fire a lethal dose of PlayStation hardware goodies directly into it's heart and you've got a game so playable your eyes will attempt a daring escape from their sockets. The perfect mix of traditional play, new-age graphics and hot techno. You can't miss.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 7 **88**

Happiness is *Tempest*. Witness the intense light-sourcing and lens flare effects and drool. Play with unprecedented control, zero loading time, mind-blowing musical tuneage, and revolt into the best Web ever created. This is the vintage *Tempest* I love, with supercharged, high-powered PS-exclusive "X" modes, a psychedelic, eye-frying Trippy 2000 mode, and enhanced Bonus zones. Until the next time (N64, please-ease!), *Tempest* has finally peaked in the *X*-zone, right here on your trusty PlayStation. There's simply no better way to lose your social life!

G 8 C 10 P 10 M 10 O 8 **97**

The *Tempest* legend continues! One of the most addictive and challenging (yet cunningly simple) games of all time finally gets a 32-bit look in, and thankfully they've really gone to town in every single way possible! For the crusties, there's original *Tempest* to play (wow, those vector graphics are amazing!), the Atari version's in there (anyone want to buy a Jaguar?) and there's even a couple of 32-bit improvements into the bargain! Add Trippy mode (please stop this feature, I must lie down) and you're set for weeks at a time! Pick this up and you'll never put it down!

G 8 C 8 P 10 M 8 O 9 **95**



FINAL DOOM
PLAYSTATION
WILLIAMS-CD
3D SHOOTER

For anyone expecting something new, you might be disappointed. It's the same *Doom* as before, but if you've played the first to death, *Final* contains a new collection of specially-designed levels to test your skills on. It's nice to give PlayStation owners the chance to play new stages, especially since you can't easily add additional ones like on the PC. Just be warned, the set included in *Final* is sure to give you many a sleepless night.

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **89**

As the last incarnation of *Doom* before it hits the 64th power, *Final Doom* for the time being reigns supreme. With hellish levels spawned from unholy fans and twisted programmers, *FD* is also the toughest *Doom* I've ever played. Although the graphics are still pretty basic, there's loads of light sourcing, cool new textures, and a good frame rate. It's the size and difficulty of the game that keeps me playing.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **88**

You just can't get a more fear-inducing, blood-splattered and gore-filled game than the great grandaddy of 'em all, and this update provides players with 32 more levels of constant combat carnage and creeping terror. Sure, there's some graphical anomalies (and half as many levels as the PC version), but PlayStation owners can rejoice with more DeathMatch action (the most addictive two player game ever!) and enough cunning in level design to keep all but the most demonic player happy for days! The best *Doom* until the big one...

G 8 C 10 P 10 M 8 O 5 **95**



IMPACT RACING
SATURN
JVC-CD
RACING/SHOOTING

Impact Racing looks like a game that should have come out a year ago. The gameplay (in terms of racing ala *Daytona*, or say *Wipeout*) holds little merit, as getting around the tracks fast takes very any skill. No, it's shootin' you'll do to progress, while trying to race at the same time. Executed properly, this might work, but here it just falls short. The music and overall presentation are a slick package. But someone opened it and let the gameplay out.

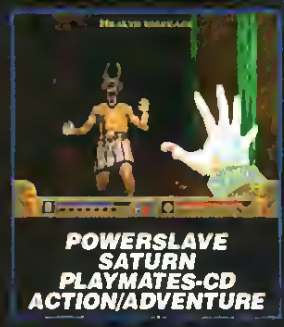
G 7 C 7 P 5 M 8 O 8 **60**

JVC's stalwart attempt to foray into the world of racing (with *Wipeout* elements thrown in for good measure) has some interesting touches, but many factors which let it down. The biggest drawback is the fact that I'd just finished a solid week of joy playing *Wipeout XL* when I sat down to this title, and the ease of completion, lack of course width or imagination, nondescript announcer and rough scenery had me screaming for my Psygnosis CD back. However, with perseverance I managed a moderately exciting race or two, but nothing to entice me back to the *Impact* track.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 8 O 8 **68**

I liked this game a lot. Ever since *Crash 'n Burn*, I've always been a sucker for driving shooters. And much like *C'n'B*, success in *Impact Racing* isn't predicated by incredible driving skills; it's more of a blaster than anything else. The graphics are pretty good, although the car appears to float sometimes, and the techno tunes are some of the best I've heard all year. I only wish the weapon upgrades were more spectacular, but the game is still fun and very playable.

G 8 C 7 P 8 M 10 O 8 **78**



POWERSLAVE
SATURN
PLAYMATES-CD
ACTION/ADVENTURE

Powerslave... the *Doom* alternative! I'm happy to say that this is not a clone. Set in mythological times in the land of Pharaohs, *Powerslave* presents the corridor gamer with new weaponry, new play mechanics, like swimming and jumping, and has the hottest light sourcing you've ever seen on the Saturn. The controls and interface are equally impressive. A finely produced piece of software!

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 7 **80**

Impressive! I'm as tired of *Doom* clones as anyone, but this is really the first good one on Saturn, easily blowing away *Robotica* and *Alien Trilogy*. The lighting effects are spectacular, and the game moves at a nice, fast pace. I just wish that they'd have tried a little harder to do something original... They clearly have the programming skill to do more than just another *Doom* knock-off.

G 8 C 7 P 8 M 8 O 3 **85**

A *Doom*-style adventure smothered in creeping Egyptian terror awaits! There's a lot more movement than *Doom* (you look up, down and jump for a start), and there's light-sourcing on the projectiles that'll make you shudder in delight. Huge sprawling levels, a new slant on gameplay (you can return to previously explored zones to uncover more secrets) and the perfect capturing of the Egyptian mythos mark this game out from the pack. Thoroughly enjoyable, but be warned; miss a jump and you'll fry, and the US Saturn joypad renders any complex manoeuver (such as circling an opponent) almost impossible...

G 8 C 9 P 8 M 8 O 8 **92**



3 DIRTY DWARVES
SATURN
SEGA-CD
ACTION PLATFORM

2D gaming the way it oughta be! Take awesome hand drawn art, fine scrolling and parallax backgrounds, play mechanics 'til the cows come home, but 3D (and truly awesome) bosses, wrap it in a cooool soundtrack and you've got one burnin' 2D Saturn game. Besides being the first real enhancement in 2D beat-'em-up play mechanics in years, 3DD is just a gas to play and it's got hordes of artfully dastardly levels. I like it – I like it a lot.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **85**

Creative minds are working overtime at the Appaloosa HQ. 3DD is one of the craziest games I've ever seen. Who'd-a thunk it? A bunch of dwarf-like smurfies, loaded down with gear from an array of sports, lumbering along picking up their fallen pals as they get pummelled by enemies I can't describe. And that's the first ten seconds of 3DD! The gameplay reaches unexpected diversity and hilarious thrills from that point on.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 8 **88**

Gimme some sugar! SegaSoft has just single-handedly brought 2D joy back to life on the Saturn! Everything in *3DD*, from start to finish, involves the Saturn showcasing its 2D superpowers. Make no mistake, with 15 solid levels of side-scrolling beat-'em-up mayhem, *3DD* is a heck of a good game... but check out those graphics! Fine scrolling, mad scaling, beautiful animation, and bosses too cool to believe. Hot 3-player gameplay tops off the wish list. Check *3DD* out NOW!

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 10 **92**



VF KIDS
SATURN
SEGA-CD
FIGHTING

Since I didn't have to pay to play *VF Kids*, I had a great time watching cute little versions of the *VF* cast fight it out baby style. The graphics are the quality you'd expect from Sega and the music and CG, well, Sagat. Would I buy *VF Kids*? Probably not. It's a clone of a game I'm done with. But I'd borrow it from a friend and never return it.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 8 O 7 **80**

Taken as a complete fighting game, this is a truly seminal piece of work; you've got cool cutesy characters with awesome facial expressions; deep, deep gameplay and numerous hilarious cheats (such as Oscar's goldfish-bowl head!). However, this is also identical to *Virtua Fighter 2* regarding play mechanics and this is the main reason why I can't recommend it unequivocally. For those without *Virtua Fighter 2* in their collection, I'd recommend *VF 2* over this (I prefer my pugilists with the usual-sized craniums), and for those already in possession of *VF2*... stick with it; there's little extra here.

G 8 C 10 P 8 M 8 O 5 **93**

VF Kids is hyper cute, and good fun for you and a chum at friends to screw around with. The character models are cool, the arranged soundtrack is cool and the endings are a neat surprise. But really, this game is just a saw coal of palm on an old tille, sort of like having to pay for *VF Remix* after buying *Virtua Fighter 1*. It's a must for true *VF*-ophiles, but everyone else might just want to rent it.

G 9 C 7 P 8 M 8 O 5 **80**

SUDDENLY, THINGS ARE GETTING PERSONAL.

Now, it's your reputation on the line. And time to leave your mark in this perfect translation of the #1 arcade phenomenon. On your side is the innovative custom combo system, now allowing you to link together your own series of brutal attacks. You'll need every possible advantage to take on a total of 18 fighters, the most ever in Street Fighter legend. Remember, hesitation is deadly. Because in the end, it's all about who's the last one left standing.





STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

CAPCOM

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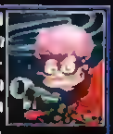


SF ALPHA 2
SATURN
CAPCOM-CD
FIGHTING



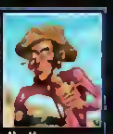
Aagh! Being confined to Viewpoint-size is painful. There's so much I have to say on the subject of the Saturn and PlayStation *Alpha 2s* that just cannot fit here. For now, I'll just state my general opinion: *SFA2* on the Saturn, despite it's numerous flaws, is slightly better than the PlayStation version. Look for my in-depth comparison between the arcade, Saturn and PS versions of *Alpha 2* next month!

G 6 C 9 P 8 M 7 O 7 **95**



Wow! Orion appears in the print mag! Umm... *Street Fighter Alpha 2*... Just like the PlayStation version, but with better animation touches, a better intro, and with the Saturn pad (better control). But, just like *Alpha 1* for the Saturn, it has worse sound effects and voice. And, though this version is a bit better than PlayStation *Alpha 2*, you really can't really go wrong either way. For 60 bucks this is about as arcade-perfect as you're going to get.

G 6 C 6 P 7 M 7 O 6 **94**



I pity those who've just shelled out big bucks for *Street Fighter Alpha*, because you're gonna have to buy the upgrade again! This is the closest to arcade perfection as you could wish for, and the Nickster informs me that there's even special new winning quotes on the Japanese version! Now isn't that worth the money alone? Er... Capcom has spent extra time with this (compared to the PlayStation version), and it shows; you've got a *Tekken 2*-style Sumisai mode, Devil Gyu, little in the way of missing frames and some, er, *interesting* arranged music. The most playable 2D fighter in 32-bit console land, and another Capcom triumph!

G 6 C 8 P 10 M 8 O 4 **92**



GRID RUNNER
SATURN
VIRGIN-CD
ACTION/PUZZLE



Grid Runner is the first 32-bit puzzle action game with graphics and music good enough to hold my interest. The gameplay is brilliantly simplistic and two player games are big on fun. The freedom offered by the ability to lay out grids is cool and the game has a polished feel from the graphics, through the gameplay, all the way to the music and effects.

G 7 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 6 **78**



I place *Grid Runner* in the same category with *Bomberman*: I find them barely tolerable in one-player mode, but they excel as multi-player games. The Saturn version is a little rougher graphically, but makes up for it in improved depth, character size, and background animation. If you can get past the cheesy intro, give it a go. The single player game is a good challenge, it just wasn't my thing.

G 7 C 6 P 7 M 6 O 7 **75**



I've been overcome by Grid itmaing! It's not the type of game that'll blow you away graphically, but the gameplay quickly pulls you in and keeps you glued for hours. I preferred the Saturn version because of the larger characters and level construction, as well as the enhanced backgrounds. You wouldn't think that collecting flags could be so involving, but having this single goal in mind really works. You'll want revenge against your opponents, NOW. Very enjoyable.

G 8 C 8 P 6 M 6 O 6 **82**



ALIEN TRILOGY
SATURN
FOX INTERACTIVE-CD
3D ADVENTURE



While *Trilogy* is a solid corridor game, it's another PS bend-me-down designed to run best on the Sony machine. It's a good game here too, but the balance seems off to me. I don't mind hard games but when you're down to the pistol in this one it's pretty much over. I'd also like to see Ripley, not just the tip of her guns. If you like a lot of strategy in your 3D, pick up a motion tracker, otherwise see *Powerslave*.

G 7 C 7 P 7 M 8 O 7 **70**



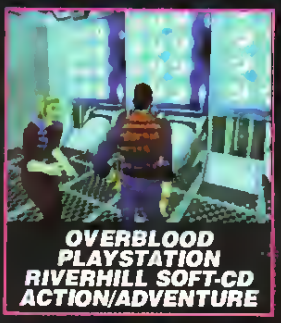
A highly commended effort by the people at Probe, which convincingly entices you into the role of Ripley as she stalks xenomorphs along dark corridors. Speaking of dark corridors, I found these passageways just a little too black and claustrophobic; we all know there's polygon clipping going on, and this is the lazy way to hide it. Despite the amazing thrill and fear generated by these enemies, they're still remarkably 2D and have an unfortunate tendency to pixellate horribly up close. The closeness and tension of the films is accurately portrayed, though.

G 6 C 7 P 8 M 6 O 6 **87**



Alien Trilogy is available as I write this, and I am not particularly fond of the game. The PS version was only okay, but now, with the Saturn version's inferior 3D, the game looks chunky, un-finished, and slow. I miss the transparencies, light sourcing, and smoother scrolling of the PS version. Sadly, the gameplay is repetitious and the enemy AI is a joke. You want real Saturn corridor 3D power? *Powerslave* is your game.

G 6 C 7 P 6 M 6 O 7 **68**

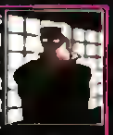


OVERBLOOD
PLAYSTATION
RIVERHILL SOFT-CD
ACTION/ADVENTURE



I settled back and prepared to play what looked like the next *Resident Evil*. A couple hours later I sold my copy used (barely) and picked up the new *Ghouls & Ghosts* puzzle game. I'm much happier with it. *Overblood* does everything a game in this genre needs to survive... wrong. Tedious empty puzzles, hurtin' battles and an overall feeling of drowsiness abounds the further you progress in the game. A shame, the engine works OK and the graphics are pretty good. *Overblood* could have been a great game with 6 more months of development.

G 8 C 6 P 5 M 7 O 6 **70**



"Trust me," I told everyone, "this one's going to be hot." I could just feel it in my bones. Cool storyline. Amazing engine. What could go wrong? Just about everything, actually. The movement in this game is awful, the later levels are super glitchy, the storyline is pretty stupid, the battles such, and it's really boring. Some of the settings are breath-taking, but playing through this one is a chore.

G 6 C 7 P 6 M 7 O 6 **75**



When we all first saw this game in Japanese magazines, we just *knew* it was going to be awesome. This point was further solidified by a videotape demo a few weeks later. I mean, this engine was amazing to say the least. When the game arrived, however... the quest couldn't possibly hope to match the visuals. It's too bad, really, because I desperately wanted to like *OverBlood*. Perhaps next time, Riverhill...

G 8 C 7 P 6 M 7 O 6 **75**



SAMURAI 3
PLAYSTATION
SNK-CD
FIGHTING



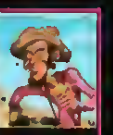
I don't have enough space to tell you how much of a disappointment *Samurai 3* is. But instead, I can tell you the good aspects of the game... er... um... well it certainly has the music (but its streamed). The choppy animation (3 frames! ARGGH!) and the loading time (ZZZZZZ...) will have you wondering if this title is even worth buying. Even the hard-core *Samurai* fan should avoid it like the plague. Don't even think of contaminating your precious PlayStation with this abhorrent translation of a game. Do what I did. Pull out your Kendo stick, pummel this abomination of a game and go play *KOF '95* instead.

G 7 C 5 P 5 M 6 O 5 **49**



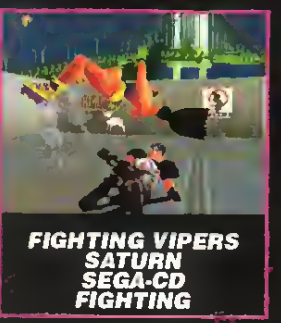
Ugh. One of the worst translations ever, and not just because of that Nick Rox special, missing frames. This game is SLOW. Slow, choppy and framey. It's simply unplayable and has no redeeming qualities. Also, what's up with seeing everyone's endings from the option screen?? Stay away.

G 7 C 5 P 5 M 5 O 5 **50**



Boy, was I glad to be out of range of the Nick Rox detonation when he began playing this one! Being a huge *Shadowrun* fanatic (yep, I bought the cartridge version of the first game!), I was frothing with delight as the PlayStation port-over of *Samurai 3* neared completion (especially after the awesome *KOF '95* conversion), and then the weeping began... Yep, this is *Samurai Slowdown* and no mistake, with extra added insult in the shape of great chunks of missing animation. The breaking point came when I found that you can select the final stage and beat the game in one round. I want the people responsible rounded up, placed against a wall and shot. How could they do this...?

G 6 C 3 P 4 M 5 O 5 **49**

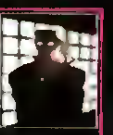


FIGHTING VIPERS
SATURN
SEGA-CD
FIGHTING



I never really thought they could do it, but here it is... *Fighting Vipers* on the Saturn. And, wonder of wonders, it's pretty awesome. Not only do you get a very good translation of the arcade game but several unique modes and the option to actually change the game's arcade balance to a new, more equal setting, something EVERYONE needs to listen to (Capcom!). Even if you've never played the arcade game, which I'll bet few of you have, don't be put off by the fruity characters; give this one a try. You'll be happy you did...

G 9 C 6 P 6 M 6 O 7 **95**



Now that I can enjoy *Fighting Vipers* in the comfort of my own home, I've come to two conclusions. One, this is a spectacular translation. Two *Fighting Vipers* is a much better game than I ever used to give it credit for. This is the most satisfying 3D fighting game (in the sense of "wow, I'm really beating someone to death!") I've ever played, and the variety in characters and fighting styles is very respectable. A must-own Saturn title.

G 6 C 6 P 10 M 6 O 6 **96**



As a conversion of a coin-op, *Fighting Vipers* more than excels; it delivers astonishing 3D graphics and in-depth gameplay, including vicious ring-outs, and a whole host of secrets. Taking the already awesome game mechanics of *VF* and tweaking bits here and there, Sega has brought you a whole new tribe of polygon pugilists, and despite looking like glam-rock rejects, they certainly know how to slap each other about the ring! And hey, this is the only game where you can undress as you fight; what greater recommendation do you need?

G 5 C 6 P 10 M 6 O 7 **94**



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PlayStation

PC CD

CORE

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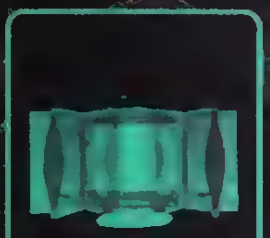
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CONGRATULATIONS!

To this month's winners:

First Prize: Shirley Lu
Rowland Heights, California

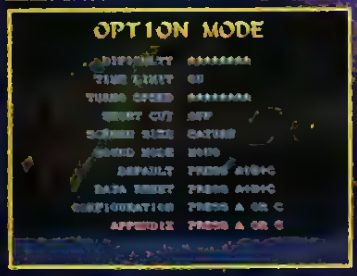
Second Prize: Neal Austria
Pequannock, New Jersey

Third Prize: Michael Ramirez
La Puente, California

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5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210
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NIGHTWARRIORS — SEGA SATURN (IMPORT) — DEBUG CODE!





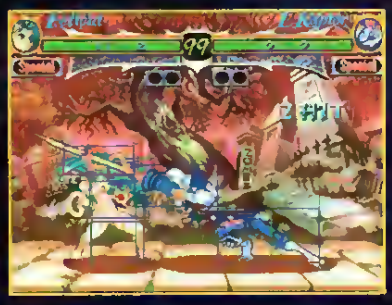


SHIRLEY LU
ROWLAND HEIGHTS, CALIFORNIA

We were shocked to receive an awesome Debug code for *NightWarriors* (Nick Rox is said to be in 'critical but stable' condition). To start, set the system clock to January 24, 1998, load the game and execute the Appendix code (choose configuration in Option Mode and press B, X, Down, A, Y). Then in Option Mode, enter these commands quickly under the appropriate item (you'll hear a spot effect chime when they're input correctly):

Difficulty:	X, X, Right, Y, Z
Turbo Speed:	X, X, Right, A, Z
Screen Size:	A, C, Y, Y, Up
Default:	Y, X, Left, A, B
Configuration:	B, X, Down, A, Y
Appendix:	X, X, Down, B, C

Once you've completed the new Appendix code, you'll hear Gallon howl. Now reset the system and start a normal game with a difference...





This new debug mode is activated during the game, and enables the following to be activated:

Show Damage:	Down + R + X
Square Frame:	Down + R + Y
Start Ending:	Down + R + Z
Stop Energy Loss:	Down + R + A
Stop Time Clock:	Down + R + B
Unlimited Specials:	Down + R + C

Good hunting people, let more Darkstalking begin!



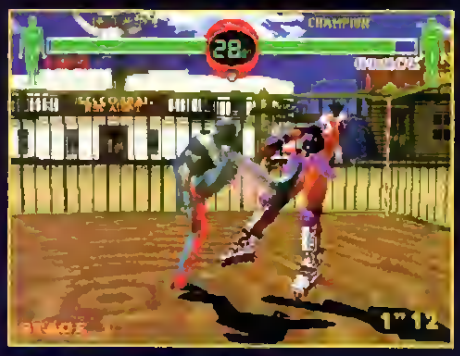
LEGEND OF OASIS — SEGA SATURN — TWO PLAYER MODE?!

Want a doppelganger of Leon to join the first player? All you need to do is to be in an area with no enemies about. Press the Z button to summon weapon select, then hold down the L Shift button and the X button. When released, another Leon appears for the second player to control. Should you wish to dispel him, perform exactly the same process.



NEAL AUSTRIA
PEQUANNOCK, NEW JERSEY

FIGHTING VIPERS — SEGA SATURN (IMPORT) — EXTRA CHARACTERS, DIFFERENT CLOTHES



PEPSIMAN

For Dural's mutant brother, beat the game on the Very Hard setting with any character. Once accomplished, return to the main menu and scroll down until you hit the white option screen. Hit Start and you can select the stage, no damage and view character portraits as well as selecting Pepsiman in your future batfles!



KUMACHAN

To control to mutant offspring of Kuma and Genma (Ranma's dad), follow the exact instructions for selecting Pepsiman and you'll also be able to select this great lolloping teddy bear, or a beachball panda for those wishing another color.



HONEY'S NEW OUTFIT

Fancy some *Sailor Moon* outfits for Honey? You will when you see them! To obtain this fashionable attire, complete the game on Very Hard with Honey, then go to the Versus screen. From here you'll notice two sets of clothes for two different Honeys! Both pack a nasty punch, and Honey's new outfit can only be shown off in Versus mode.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS MONTH'S SUPER HOCUS POCUS GIVEAWAY WINNERS! KEEP SENDING THOSE TRICKS IN!

MICHAEL RAMIREZ
LA PUENTE, CALIFORNIA

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In 2096 Having a Bomb
Strapped to You is a Sport.
C4
C4
01:35

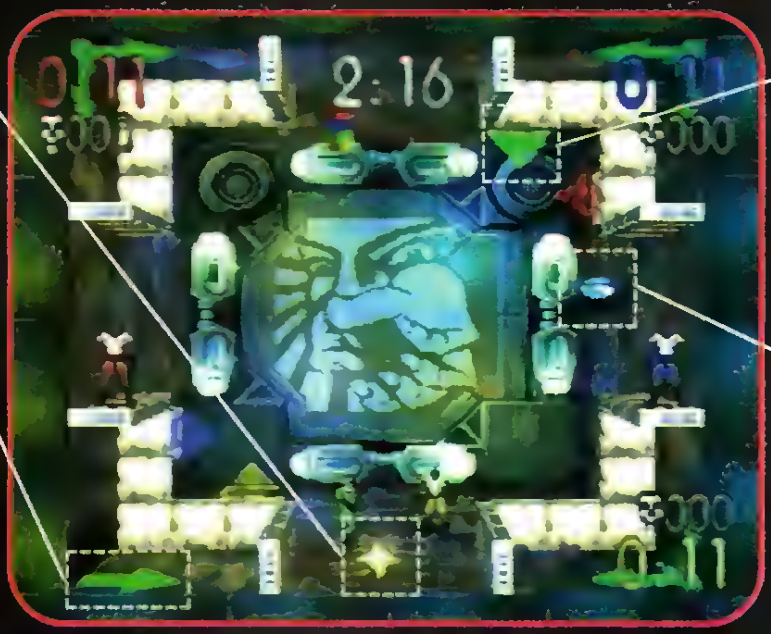
[Want to Play?]

The Crystal

Drop it in your reactor to increase your time.

The Kickers

Kicking these rotates the chamber 90 degrees.



The Reactors

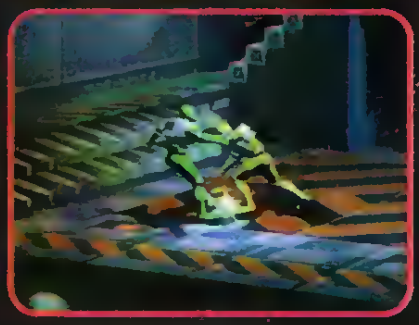
Drop the crystal in an opponent's reactor to drain his Kill-Clock.

The Power-Ups

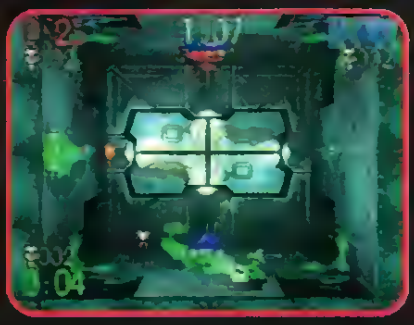
Hi-Jumps, Crystal Bombs, Mercuries, Mag Boots & more.



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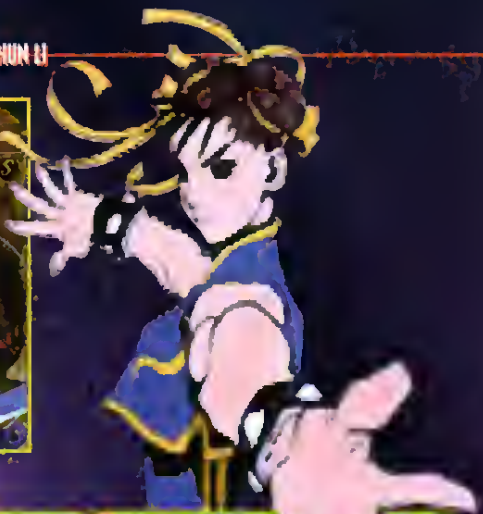
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STREET FIGHTER ZERO 2 — SEGA SATURN (IMPORT) — EVIL RYU, SUPER TURBO ZANGIEF AND CHUN LI





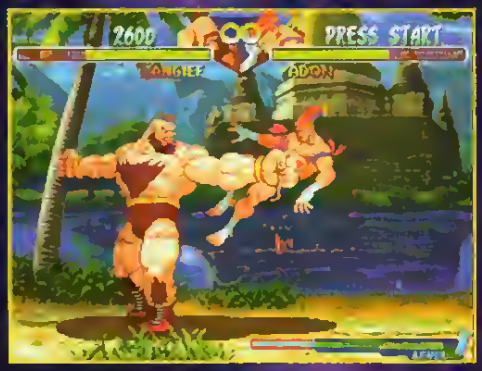


Evil Ryu is available to play in the Saturn *SFA2*! For those in the dark, you must highlight Ryu, press and release Start, move Right to Adon, Up to Gouki, Down to Adon and Left to Ryu. Hold Start and press any buttons tor Ryu with Gouki's power!



Along with Super Turbo Chun-Li (see code tor PlayStation version, there's two *Street Fighter 2* original characters (without a super gauge) in this version ot *SFA2*! For Zangiet, highlight him, press and release Start and then move down to Sagat, left to Nash, up to Ryu, right to Ken and down to Zangiet. Now hold Start and press any button tor this Russian bear!





Our final *SF2* character is Dhalsim. Highlight his portrait, press and release Start, left to Zangiet, down to Sagat, right to Nash, then up to Dhalsim. Hold Start and press any button tor this yogic fakir!





SAMURAI SHODOWN 3 — SONY PLAYSTATION (IMPORT) — THE DEVIL RIDES OUT...









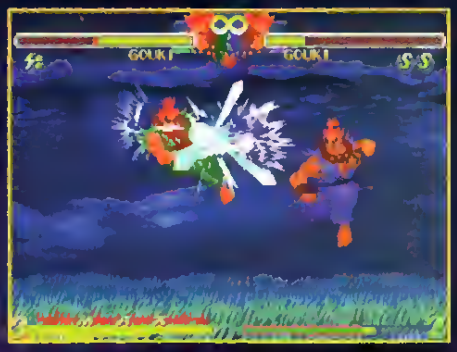
Despite the much wailing and gnashing ot teeth at the hideous translation ot a great Neo•Geo tighter we're still more than happy to reveal to you how to obtain the big boss; Zankuro. Go to the character select screen, highlight Haohmaru, then move Left to Basara, Down to Kyoshiro, Right to Rimururu, Up to Haohmaru, Right to Shizumaru, Down to Nakoruru, Right to Amakusa, Up to Gaira and Left to Shizumaru (easy, eh?). When the clock countdown reaches 03, press Square, Circle, X and Start all together. With any luck, the huge frame ot Zankuro should appear...


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STREET FIGHTER ZERO 2 — SONY PLAYSTATION (IMPORT) — SUPER GOUKI, DAY-GLO FIGHTERS, SUPER TURBO CHUN LI, EXTRA COLORS, ZANGIEF'S POSE



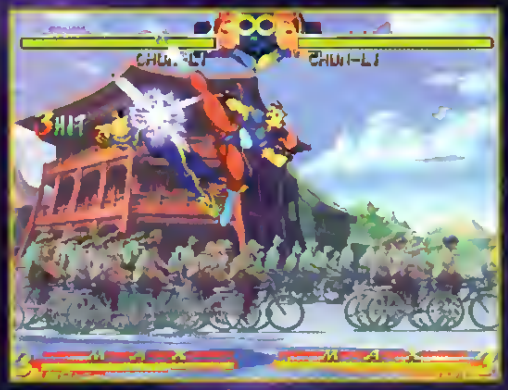




For the ultimate version of the ultimate warrior, highlight Gouki, press and release Select. Then press Down to Adon, Right to Chun-Li, Right to Guy, Down to Rolento, Left to Sakura, Down to Rose, Left to Birdie, Down to Gouki, Right to Vega, Right to Dan and then (finally!) Right to Gouki. Then hold down Select and press a button for a Gouki with increased damage, double air fireballs, and standing fierce two-in-ones!



Fancy controlling the Seper Turbo version of Chen-Li? All yoe have to do is move the cursor to Chun-Li and press end hold Select for five seconds. Affor the allotted time, the first lady of street fighting chonges her ottire (my, what beaetiful fights!) and becomes her old self once more. The only differences we've spotted aro hor fireball (charge motion), some chonges in her two-in-ones, and she remains differently clothed for her ending.



Here's o coeple ot strango fellows; a day-glo Vega and an all-white Dhalsim. To obtain these weird character glitches, enter Training mode, execete a teleport move, and in midwarp paese the game, go to the menu, select Normal and yoe'll begin yoer next fight with this glitched vorsion of yoer characfer. All the shadow and projectile moves are differently colored, bet otherwise they play exactly the same. Also remember; teleporting again reverts yoer character back to their original hee...







Thankfully the PlayStation version of *Street Fighter Alpha 2* teafures six different costume changes (doesn't Dan look great in his fluorescent blue jogging gi?). At the characfer select screen (in Versus or Training mode), highlight your tighter and press one ot the following: 1 punch, 1 kick, both punches, both kicks, square & X, or triangle & circle. Now your tighting can become all the more colorful!

MATTHEW WU

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK



For Zangiet's originel arcade Introdection in each boef of tighting; press and hold down Select beforo the bout begins (this only works in Versus or Training modos). Now the man-moentain swishos his cape!

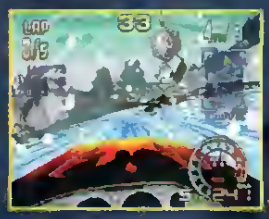
Go for a spin. Or burn up the road.



"There are two kinds of people in the world. Those who wear pink. And those who see red. If you're in the second category, you know other racing games just aren't up to speed. So hit the Burning Road."



Four kick ass vehicles scream over ***three savage tracks. Wipe-out weather conditions*** rock your world. Choice of ***automatic or manual transmission*** puts you in control–while ample opportunities to ***slam or be slammed*** hurl you out of it. From there on in, your performance is not a pretty picture. Especially when you consider all the ***visible damage*** left behind. Toss ***blazing arcade quality action*** and ***4 distinct camera angles*** into the mix for the ultimate roadkill recipe. And unlike those other games where you may never know what hit you, Burning Road's ***entire replay mode*** plays the whole race start to finish–not just lap highlights.



So trash the tutu and strap on a helmet. Because with Burning Road, you're an accident waiting to happen ...but not for long.

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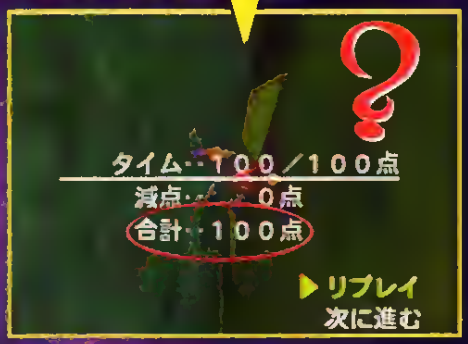
TWI FUNSOFT RP PlayStation

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Rocket Belt

Want an awesome way to earn yourself 100 points for simply creshing into the ground? Weil, iook no further! This weird cheat only works with the Rocket Beit, end only on the two leveis where you move the giant green bail into the vortex (Course B, mission 3 and Course P, mission 2). Launch from your psd and find e unused target area (marked with yellow end black hashed ilnes) end hover about 30 meters over it. Let your fuel run down (preferabiy by employing the blue hover boosters) until you receive both the warning messages. You'll run out of ges and plummet earthwards, hitting the ground hard end tumbling to e halt. Then the screen will turn white end you'ii receivs an 'out of area' messege in Jspanese snd then, as if by magic, you'll receive 100 points for this disaster! Beats hitting a green bailoon for haif an hour!



Gyrocopter



Pilotwings 64 ie now the finest flyer ever; especieily since there's a reaiiy waird giitch to discovar whiia in Gyrocopter mode! Choose eny competitor end go to any Gyrocopter atage (without any crosswinds blowing). Take off, tiy straight ahead and keep accaierating untii you reach 250kph. Than hoid accelarate and watch your craft rise siowiy to 500 meters. Ae soon aa this altitude is reached, puil beck herd on your 3D stick and watch es your Gyrocopter iaunches into the eky. You'ii etert to siow down dramaticaiiy, but keep holding back until your height reachea 630 metare. Tha second thia happena, push forward on the 3D stick end you'll be ahocked to see your craft iose height aiightly but then climb to insene ievele! The camera will zoom in on the Gyrocopter and then apin eround to give e fuli tece view ot your pilot, and than tha craft wiii move further awsy from the cemere view end up into the stratosphare. Keep going end you'ii reach 9999 metars end 999kph! Stop at around 1000 metera and wrestie with the 3D stick to creata the giitching masterpiaces seen below! Warning!! Once at 9999 meters, your gama will crash!!



KONAMI



CONTRA

legacy of war™

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RATING PENDING RP

PlayStation

3-D GLASSES INCLUDED WITH PLAYSTATION VERSION!

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Look at all those hats! Wonder how we made all of them? Well, go to any level where Mario loses his cap (the desert or this snow zone) and make the plumber lose his hat. Watch where the hat lands, but don't pick it up. Instead, go to a warp (like the tree shown below) and then run back to your hat. Once you're there, tip-toe slowly to the headgear and Mario will grab it ("Here we go!"), but there'll be another hat underneath it! Be careful not to run into these two hats or you'll pick both of them up. Now there'll be two hats (one left behind and one on your head!), so repeat the hat loss routine (get the hat blown off, watch where it lands, warp and return again), pick up the second hat and you'll find another one under it!! You can repeat this 50 times for fifty hats, when, finally, the game shuts down!





A variation on this cheat enables Mario to continue his merry way around this snow level with his hat in his hand! Do the routine for obtaining two hats (explained to the right), and when you're creeping to collect the hats, grab both of them at the same time. With luck you'll pick one, then Mario stops in the middle of putting on the other hat!!













Want to kill Bowser in seconds every time you meet him? I thought so! Firstly, grab that big dinosaur's tail as if you were going to spin him, but then let go immediately. Then position yourself just in front of him (see picture two), and when he's at about that distance, press your attack button right away; Bowser instantly moves in front of you, with you grabbing his tail! Now keep moving him toward the bombs and you'll destroy him in no time at all!

You've all seen that penguin challenge you to a race. Perhaps you thought he was a little undernourished? Well don't worry; once you've collected all 120 stars, he'll bloat out to three times the size! Why?















Having trouble on those sheer slopes? Well you don't have to worry any longer; good ol' Mario must have anti-gravity dungaree knee-pads on; because when you crawl on flat ground next to these slopes (blue P switch and first snow level for example), he'll continue to move up the slopes without sliding for as long as you'll let him!


KONAMI
PROJECT
OVERKILL
IT'S READY–ARE YOU?
PlayStation
MATURE
M
www.konami.com



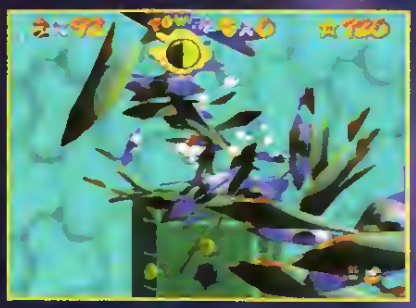
"It's-a the Princess! Sigh!" Hope you've spotted this window (left) and viewed Mario from behind this strange place (right)!







Snooze underwater (above) and swim vertically (right) for some frantic fishy fun!





Walking on water? Just how does this plumber do it?!











Getting tired of that Penguin's cheeping? Throw him down the chimney! That'll teach him! Also try diving near the little teller and he'll copy you! How cute!



That's gotta hurt! Only those with enough skill can get Mario up to the very top of the castle! Look at the view!





Time to die in mid-slide!! Start the Big Mountain slide, get to between the second and third blue coins and swing right. Bounce onto the wood and jump again onto the bottom part of the track. If you make it, you'll die in mid-slide, but the maneuver takes real skill!

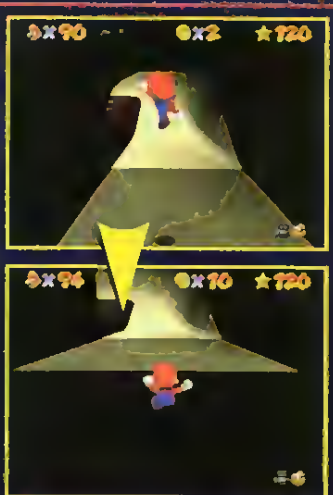


Just how did we get Mario up here? Once again, we aren't telling!

Fancy a wander around the root of this section? Simply sidetip near to the upstairs double doors and you'll leap onto a sea of blue where a short walk ends in a slide back down to earth!



Big Mountain slide time! Start your race as usual, but at the first tunnel, halt your sliding (by pressing down and jump kicking backwards). Go back far enough and the track'll disappear!





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- Next Generation

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-GAMEFAN







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RATING PENDING K-A ESRB

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PREVIEW

LAYOUT - E. STORM

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - APPALOOSA

PUBLISHER - KONAMI

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - N/A

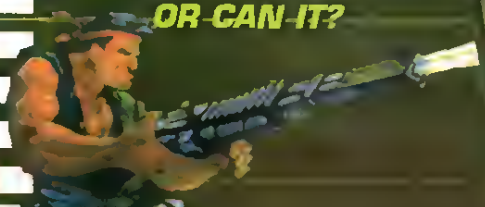
AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



E. STORM
THE LEGEND LIVES ON...



CONTRA IN 3D? IT CAN'T BE!... OR CAN IT?





Everything you know and love about *Contra*, one of the hottest video game series of all time, comes to life in this true to its roots first 32-bit version, *Contra: Legacy of War*. Any gamer worth his salt remembers at least one version of *Contra*, and those of us who've been pounding pads since 8-bit remember five burnin' console versions, not to mention the GameBoy titles. To date my favorite is the mind-blowing Genesis version, which remains today one of the most finely tuned and hardest games to beat.

The announcement that *Contra* was being developed for the PlayStation was received here at GF with great adulation. It's one of the three series we've grown accustomed to judging a new console by, the other two being *Ghouls and Ghosts* and *Castlevania* (*Castlevania* will finally make its 32-bit debut this December in Japan and early next year here in America). The announcement that it was being developed by European developers, Appaloosa, however, was received with great concern. *Contra* has always been a Japanese-bred series. Would the relative newcomers from the UK be up to the task of sustaining the legend? Well, it seems they are. In fact, considering how complete this version of *Contra* is (not very), I'd venture to say it may be the best one yet. The game, as you can see, uses a vertically and horizontally scrolling 3/4-view polygonal engine. One would think this would totally conflict with the *Contra* style of gameplay. But *au contraire*, it works over so well thanks to a team who've obviously done their homework. Two

CONTRA
LEGACY OF WAR















things quickly come into play to let you know... you're home: The bosses and major enemies have bulls-eyes that echo the familiar *Contra* 'twing' when hit, and those luscious power-ups float over head for you to jump, shoot and capture. They include of course, the Machine and Spreed gun, the homing laser, and the flame-thrower. The characters themselves too, remain completely intact in a 3D world. Jumping into a ball you can fire in all directions, and a strafe function has been added that works perfectly. The 4 team members, Ray, Cindy, Alien, and Robot (I'm sure some will change), are rendered to look, feel and play like *Contra* characters. Konami has gladly chosen to stick with the formula. I've almost forgotten to mention that *Contra: Legacy of War* will be playable with a set of red/blue paper goggles. They are not necessary to play the game but add a cool sense of depth when worn.

The familiar *Contra* gameplay coupled with the hokey 3D eyewear (I love hokey 3D eyewear), brings me back to the good old days. *Bring it to me until I'm full*, I proclaim, *for I am ready to receive such goods forever!* We'll have a nearly completed version of *Contra* for an update in the next issue.

ES



















MY TRIP TO SEATTLE

BY CRASH BANDICOOT.™



1. HERE'S ME DRIVING.



4. HERE'S ME SHOWING OFF MY GAME'S REAL-TIME 3-D WORLD WITH ITS LUSH, ORGANIC ENVIRONMENTS, TONS OF OBSTACLES, SECRET PATHWAYS AND BONUS LEVELS. OUTSIDE OF NINTENDO® HEADQUARTERS.



5. HERE'S ME BEING ESCORTED OF
THE PREMISES. BY SECURIT

For game hints call 1-900-933-SONY(7669) The charge is $0.95 per minute. Callers under the age of 18 must get parental permission to call Touch-tone phone is required Available 24 hours a day/7 days a week U S. only. The Sony Computer Entertainment logo is a trademark of Sony Corporation PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. U R NOT E is a trademark of Sony Interactive Entertainment Inc "Crash Bandicoot" and the Crash Bandicoot logo are trademarks and copyrighted properties of Universal Interactive Studios, Inc © 1996 Universal Interactive Studios, Inc Source Code © 1996 Naughty Dog, Inc Nintendo is a registered trademark of Nintendo of America Inc. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association Screen shots are actual game screens taken from monitors www.sony.com.



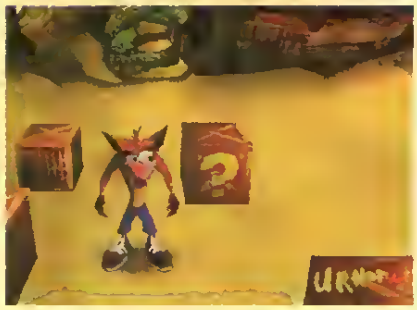
2. HERE'S ME AT THE SPACE NEEDLE.



3. HERE'S ME WITH SOME OF THE GALS AT SEATTLE SLIM'S.

MY GAME →











Crash Bandicoot

PlayStation



Sony's long-awaited entry into the platform game arena. You've never experienced anything quite as sensational as this fully animated cartoon world coming to life. It's flooded with obstacles, enormous levels, unbelievable graphics, detailed real-time lighting, amazing music and sound effects. Packed full of solid gameplay, hidden bonus levels, secret pathways and fiendish traps, this is the "must-have" game of the year. Travel in real time across 3D worlds in over 30 levels of intriguing gameplay with thousands of frames of animation! Interact with hilarious, fully rendered 3D cartoon-animated characters. It's packed with all the clas-

MY LOGOS ↓







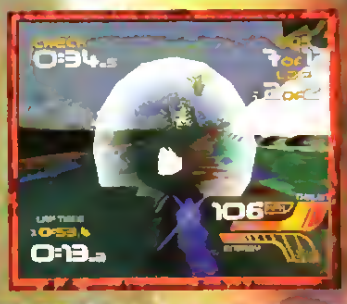


WIPEOUT XL

"A ball bounces. A pin drops. A man falls.
Gravity is the glue which binds us to our planet. We are about to apply the solvent which will free our species forever."

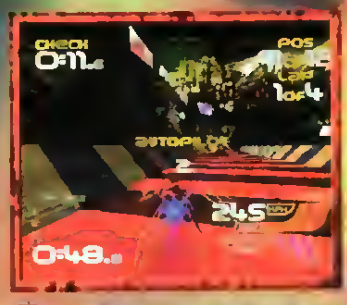
- Pierre Belmondo (Director of European AG Research speaking at a demonstration of anti-gravity technology, Nevada, April 2035






SOAR THROUGH PSYGNOSIS' SENSATIONAL FUTURISTIC RACING EXPERIENCE

This is the next step forward...





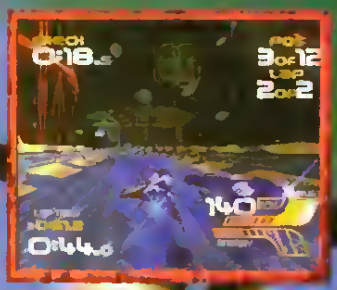
I've just spent the last week glued to my PlayStation, powering around anti-grav courses at speeds not experienced since scooting around the *Ridge Racer Revolution* tracks. *Wipeout XL* has arrived, courtesy of the Liverpool-based developers at Psygnosis. You all remember the first *Wipeout*, with sleek looks, great sound and cool gameplay? Well, taking this racing premise to the very extreme has resulted in this monster of a title, with the familiar logos and decals, those hyper-cool futuristic sleds and brain-numbing courses. So, is this the PlayStation's ultimate racing experience? Or is it just the old Wipeout with a new coat of paint slapped on? Read on and find out...







POWER THROUGH 8 ALL-NEW TRACKS AT NERVE-WRACKING SPEEDS!











From the moment the rendered intro aeta your heert a pounding (the fineet eeen since Nemco'e *Tekken 2*), you know you've reeched racing Nirvana; barring eny hideous miahaps between now and the finished relesss (I've just been phyeicelly dragged away from an 80% complete veraion), I can safely say this la the moet fun I've ever had with s racing geme. Firet off, the game moves slower then the easiest coureea in the first *Wipeout*, leading aome GameFan steff to ecratch their heads in puzzlement. Once The Enquirer hed shown his recing proweas however, the game changed modes, the difficulty wes upped, and the game got very fast indeed. So quick in fect, that you'll sit there open-mouthed and unable to believe the PleyStation is able to shift es meny polygona at these speeds!

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - PSYGNOSIS

PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1 OR 2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

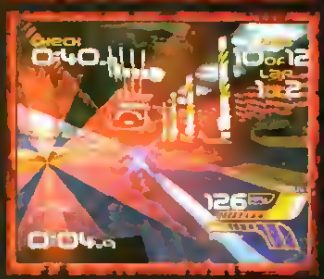
AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

You'll cruise around the first couple of tracka admiring the scenery, looking for pop-up (cunningly hidden behind huge billboarde or corners) and find that the 3D engine is perhapa the moat realletic ever seen. Of course, racing aleda haven't been invented yet, but if they did exist; they'd move exactly like those featured in *Wipeout XL*. You know it! You'll bob and weave, toast a few sleda that stray too close to your creft, and generally gewk at how clean, detailed and first rate all the textures look.

Then you'll discover the gameplay enhancements. Most importantly, if you take a corner badly, insteed of glancing into a wall and stopping completely (like in the first *Wipeout*), you'll scrape the electric fence, sparks shoot out from the aides of your sled and you'll ricochet into the race again with little epeed loas. The eddition this makes to your gaming pleasure cannot be fethomed, and the single most important reason why *Wipeout XL* is so much more playeble this time around. You can now take corners more ferociouely, knowing that you'll hit aome benda heed on (and crunch your creft to a halt), but hoping for e scrape as you power-slide round before grappling to straighten out sgain.

Wipeout continues overleaf...











CHIEF HAMBLETON
WHOOOAAAAH!
THIS IS FAAAAASST!

REFINED ENERGY WEAPONS CAPABILITY GUARANTEES YOU TOTAL ANNIHILATION!





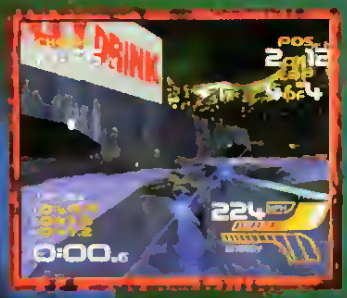




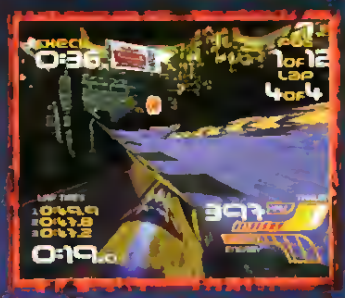
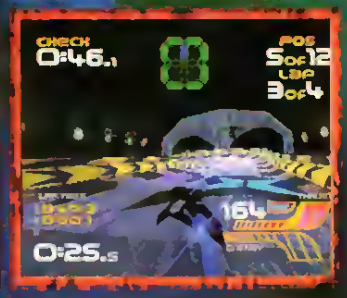
"Okay... so I press this to accelera.... whoooaaa, this is fast!! Hand me the controls, I'm going for another spin! Waahoooo!! Give me another go right now!!"

- Chief Hambleton (Associate Editor) speaking two minutes after playing Wipeout XL at Piranha level, Agoura Hills, August 1996



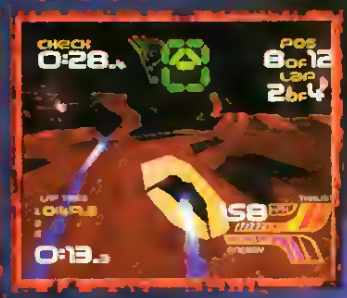



The only way of alowing ia by employing the left and right air-brakee (ahoulder buttone), end theee are used to poweralide around the treck. They work the craft beeutifully, end allow pin-point accuracy aa your eied acreame through tunnele and over bumpa. Mention muat elso be made of the weapona. As you can tell from the screenehots, the light traila left by them are nothing ehort of estoniahing (the eort of effects you'd expect to eee on the N64), and the exhaust treila follow the creft seamleeely no matter what the epeed. Fire your rockete et an enemy cloae in front of you and hie whole craft shuddera, or elae flipa over and tumbiee above you, accompanied by a bright exploaion. Of courae, once you've gained ecceaa to Phantom claea recing, you won't have time to see any of thie. You'll juat be concentrating on how to etay alive!

After a week of conatant play, I can honestly say thet for my money, thie ia more fun than Sega *Rally*, more intenae than *Burning Road*, and believe it or not, faster than *Ridge Racer Revolution* (with the Angel carl). At the time of writing, you won't find more of an edrenaline rueh in gaming than clembering into a Piranhe-ciese cruiser, weeving through a





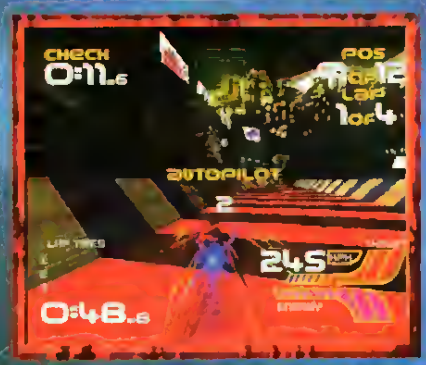
A WHOLE HOST OF SECRET FEATURES AWAIT THE VICTOR!

peck of aleda like a madman, acraping around bends and nuking the leader to take gold at the very laat second! The fun doean't end there, either, as there'a a two-player mode to deal with (which ie meking a welcome return, and will be featured in our review ae it was eadly not aelectable in thia veraion) end of course, the obligetory aecrats (which we can't reveel at the moment).

So thie ia looking like racing perfection? Almost, but with one small niggling problem... we've beaten it already (deapite eeeurances that this would be tougher than the original). Both myself and The Enquirer are praying for mora extres to extend the longevity further (auch aa mirror mode, the original tracka and more aiede) by the time the finiahed version lands in our laps. Who knowe, Paygnosis might even ect on theae pleaa, but even if they don't, they've got my vote for beet racer of 1996. Roll on the review...

TRACKS

You want tracka? Well, from our almoat-finiahed veraion of the geme, we managed to acceaa a total of eight of them (eix normal and two aecret), all coming complete with a multitude of nasty turne, jumpe and atraights. The beginner'a track takee you through an interlinking pipework (complete with hieaing steem and loada of girders), the aecond haa you epeeding through arctic tundra on e highwey from Hadea (with a huge hair-pin turn that'll have you wreatling your air-brakea ferociouely) and the third whiaks you off to the foreats of Chile for aome excellent acenery and a cool jump through a rocky tunnel. The remaining








WIPEOUT XL

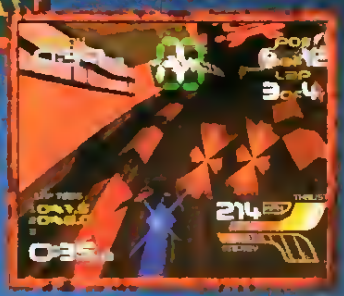
courses are of a futuristic nature, and aa you'd expect, they gat greduall more end more difficult, while the final two require some deft air-braking and your eyee taped open just to zoom round without explod-ing! Yee, theee are all great trecks, and Paygnosis have even added floating robot cameraa that track the race (and playback the raca). Awesome stuff!



WEAPONS

All those high-grade laaer-guided pieces of futuristic military hardware make another eppearance in thia varsion. Aside from the aled-killers of the first game (the Minas, Turbo Booat, Mlaalles, Electro Bolt and Shield), thare'a e whole loed of new gune to get to grips with. And thia time these weapons do more than alow you down; watch your energy or you'll blow eky-high! Run over the weapon grida to pick up a random item, and new axploaives include the Thunder Bomb (a 'amart bomb' weepon which nukes up to fiva siede at once!), Rockets (now *three* crimson lights of plasma death), the Queka Diaruptor (which ripplea the track ahaad of you, cauaing destruction in its waka), and tha infa-moua Auto-Pilot (invaluable for negotiating tight turna at speed). The last addition ia perhaps the most useful, aa tha Auto-Pilot powara through your opponanta, end can even win the race if employed at the correct momant.





SLEDS

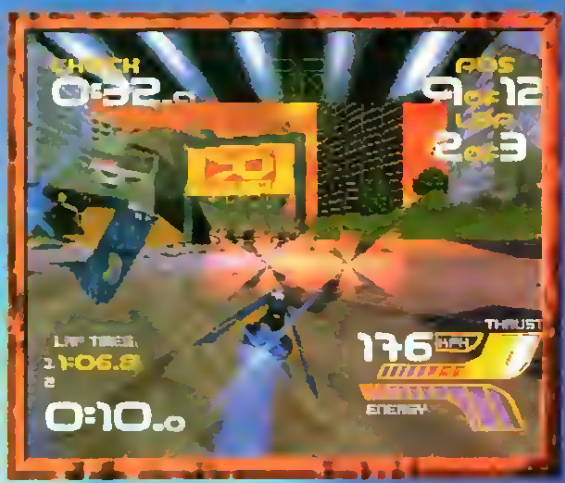
The racing aleda of tha futur have undergona transformation aa wall. Apart from taking damage and exploding,



actual pilot nemes have been loat in favor of three identical aleda per team. For beginners, we recommend the Felaar cruieere; European-built sieda with an easy turning circle and acceleretion (but poor top epeed), but overall, your choice has got to be the AG Systems. It may have low energy, but this state-of-the-art piece of Japenese hardware hee all the controllability you'll ever need. Thare'e alao the Auricom (good epeed, bad handling) end the Qirex (just don't even go theral) and unconfirmed reports of a prototype Chinese craft...

MUSIC

Good newa for US gamera craving dacent hard-core UK dance muaic: The new *Wipeout* will feature *all* tha tracka present in the UK version (if you recall, tha previoue US varaion had tha three beat tracka missing!), end that meana you've got the creem of Britiah techno pumping awey in the background ae you race. Thia time the tunea match the speed of the geme itself and euit the title perfectly (the muaic's eo good it's worth buying the CD for!), and the mualciana include FSOL (Future Sound of London; famoua for Internet gige and 'Papua New Guinea'), Underworld (famoue for rapid lyrica and an aweaome live performance), The Chemical Brothere (a techno duo from Menchester famoue for DJ and remix) end The Prodigy (famoua for shouting). The best video game mueic avar? Definitely! *CH*



CAN WIPEOUT XL MAKE THE GRADE??
SEE THE ONLY REVIEW OF WIPEOUT XL IN THE NEXT ISSUE!









TEMPEST X

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - HIGH VOLTAGE

PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - DECEMBER



CHIEF HAMBLETON
TEMPEST X IS THE RETINA FOR THE MIND'S EXPANSION...



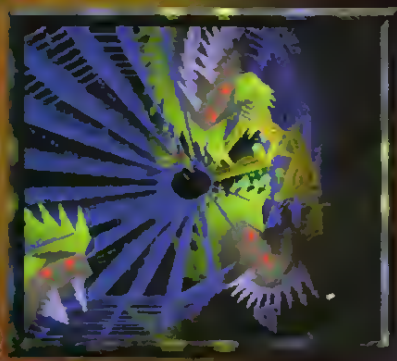
Enter the mind-expanding world of *Tempest*, the cult classic with more playability and addiction than 90 percent of the hyped next-generation software. For those uninitiated, *Tempest* places you at the controls of a small yellow spacecraft as it darts and pitches around a vectored landscape, battling through waves upon waves of enemies and increasingly manic levels, powering up with jumping icons, greater laser fire and even drone craft to help you out, and pausing only to explore strange bonus levels before the intense onslaught continues. It won legions of followers at the dawn of the video age, it single-handedly stalled the demise of Atari's Jaguar for several months (despite the dreaded *Trevor McFur* already surfacing to scare off potential buyers), and now PlayStation and Saturn owners can play a joyous translation of the original, with the added bonus of extra versions!



True *Tempest* fans won't even need to read any further; they'll already be swiftly jogging down to their video games store in ecstatic delight; but for those still unsure, let me start by saying that this represents one of the purest forms of video game addiction ever seen on the planet. The premise is delightfully simple, but the playability, light and sound effects all combine to produce one amazing product that'll have you burning the midnight oil trying to complete.



I'd have been satisfied with a couple of variations on the *Tempest* theme, but my excitement was heightened to fever pitch when I realized those nice people at Interplay went the extra mile and provided a whole load of new different modes:





There's the good ol' original *Tempest* (arcade perfection, as you'd expect), *Tempest Plus* (an enhanced version of the original with a load of extra features, and *Tempest 2000*, a full-on straight conversion of the Atari game, and *Tempest Duel*, two-player blastin' fun on the split screen. Then, for all those craving an enhanced version of the game, comes *Tempest X*, a new and improved *Tempest* with incredible lighting effects and even cooler explosions (those bonus stages have never looked so good!). Finally, for all those craving the ultimate battle, the appropriately named *Trippy 2000* puts in an appearance; a mutated and motion-blurred *Tempest X* that'll have you crying out in retinal agony! Of course, all this is topped off with the stompin' techno anthems, making your progress all the more fraught. A piece of gaming heaven given a new lease on life for the '90s, and an essential part of any self-respecting gamer's collection. ***CH***

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Pitball



PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ACCOLADE

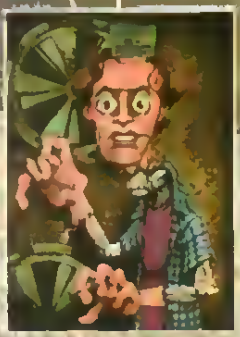
PUBLISHER - ACCOLADE

FORMAT - CD

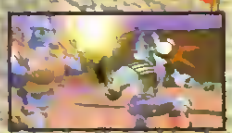
OF PLAYERS - 1-4

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

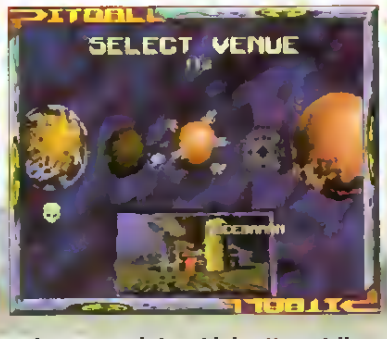
AVAILABLE - FALL '96

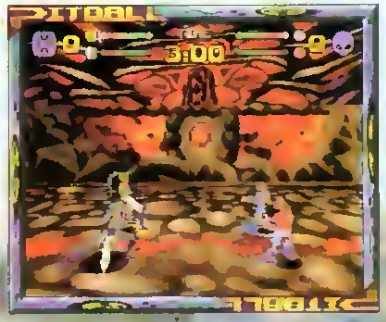


GLITCH
Cyborgs demand no salary.









This game has me glued! Why, I wonder, are we getting such an intlux ot 32-bit titles which are so incredibly simple and addictive? With *Grid Runner*, *Blast Chamber*, and now *Pitball*, we're being offered games which are incorporating totally retreshing play concepts that aren't dependent on high powered 32-bitness.

Pitball is yet another violent tuturistic sport set in outer space (I guess we'll need *something* to do on our weekends in the future). Mixing elements of basketball with other contact sports, *Pitball* is a brutal high speed action contest fought 2 on 2 in a pit arena. Many teams are up tor play, each of course with their own highs and lows, such as speed, strength, or barbaric power. Naturally, larger characters are slow but strong, and small characters, such as the temale teams, are nimble, agile, and speedy. This theory tollows through into their special moves, where the big guys have crushing blasts and the taster competitors have specials which offen strike quickly and efficiently. Inactive balls are white (tor passing) and "shoot balls" are red and can be powered-up betore release. You may also apply an exaggerated attertouch to the ball when released – ideal for scoring from tough angles.

Understanding the 'Pit' environment is the key to winning your games. You're in a real-time, texture-mapped polygon constructed arena, with multiple perspectives, light-sourcing, and various hazards. *Pitball's* action is hot, and every match is introduced by a tull Michael Buffer, "Let's get ready to rummmble!" quote. Too cool! It all this sounds appealing (trust me, it is), stay tuned for a complete review in an upcoming issue. *G*











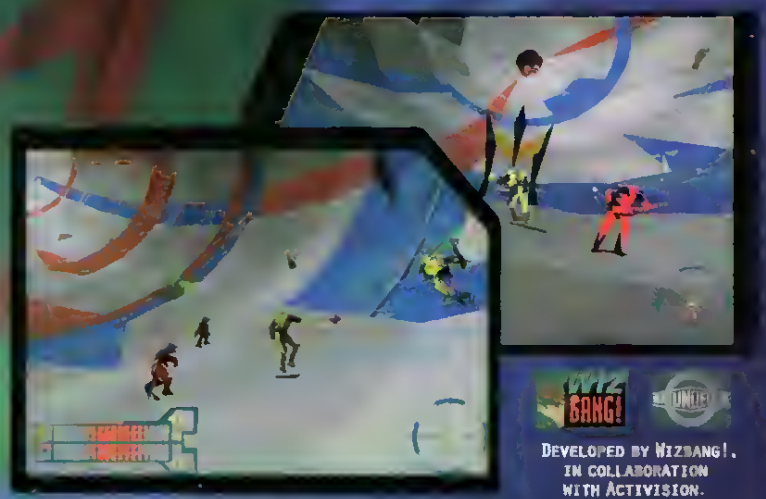


IN THE SPORT OF THE FUTURE

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PlayStation

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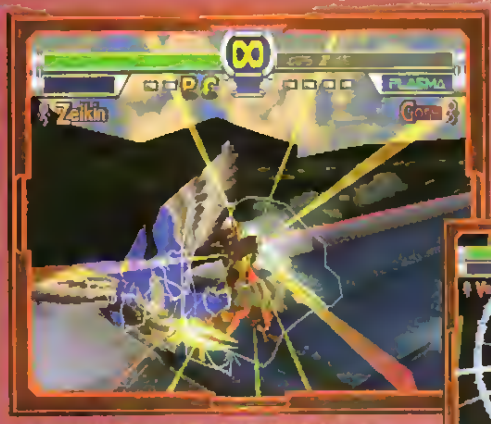
ARE YOU STRONG ENOUGH FOR THE LAST CRUSADE?

THE STAR GLADIATORS RETURN! AND BOY, DO THEY ROCK!!

Gracing arcades now and with an identical PlayStation version almost complete, *Star Gladiator* is an outstanding 3D fighter, and with more depth than you previously might have thought. A total of nine competitors have spent the last months limbering up their metallic and bio-enhanced bodies, ready to stride into the cyber combat arena and dish out some serious hurtin' to their fellow fighters in an attempt to gain audience with the dreaded Bilstein. But just how do these futuristic heroes take down their enemies in such a spectacular manner? Well fear not, as we're about to show you, with some game playing tips and the revelation of every character's winning techniques, including the dreaded Final moves! Let the Last Crusade begin!

BASIC TECHNIQUE 1 PLASMA REVERSE

Perhaps the easiest advanced technique to learn is the Plasma Reverse, a counter-move designed to retaliate against a foolhardy foe. Cross, Square and Circle are pressed together to achieve the Reverse, along with back on the D-pad, which takes the form of a defensive pose with the character flickering in red and blue hues. If successfully accomplished, your player blocks an opponent's slash and counters in a dizzying display of cyber-carnage! Also try the same manouver when your enemy is off balance for a Ricochet attack. This allows you to defend from an attack and counter with one of your choosing. You need to be quick or you'll lose the opportunity, and practice shows a Reverse is best achieved either when a foe is in the middle of a combo attack, or else when they're least expecting to be pummeled. Every single character has their own particular culling manouver, so choose your timing well. Parry that enemy swing and you'll cut swaths through your enemy as spectacular light showers and flashing discharge accompany this dance of death!







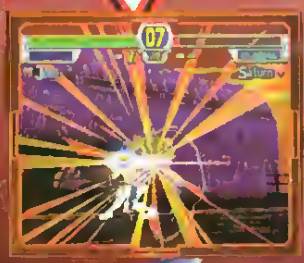
SEQUENCE 1 - VECTOR INITIATES THE PLASMA REVERSE









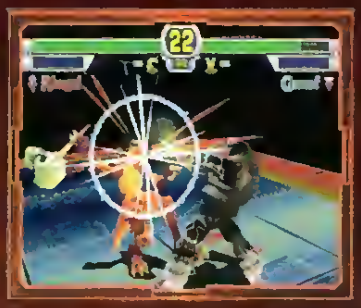


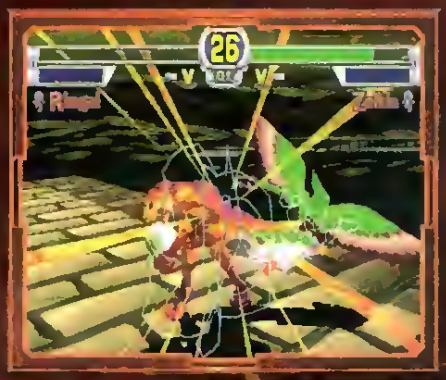




COMMENCE THE PLASMA STRIKE!

In addition to their array of deadly moves, each character has built up their inner energies before the fight, and this can be charged into a massive attack once per round. Although slow, such an attack wounds an enemy beyond compare; and to the accompaniment of some spectacular visuals! The Plasma Strike is activated by pressing Square and Triangle simultaneously, and causes the attacker to spark with unnatural electricity, blink with white energy shards and run their opponent through in a blur. Only available once per round, this attack can be easily avoided, and thus must be attempted when the enemy cannot defend themselves.





BASIC TECHNIQUE 2 - PLASMA STRIKE



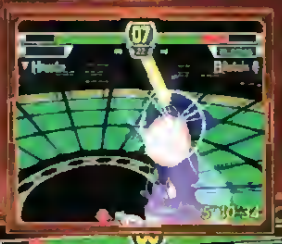


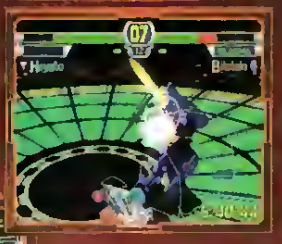




SEQUENCE 2 - HAYATO UNLEASHES THE PLASMA STRIKE AGAINST BILSTEIN

Once you've powered up your cyber-fighter and executed a Plasma attack, your fighter pierces his victim with his preferred weapon while the camera switches and replays the entire skewer from five different angles. Capcom has really gone to town





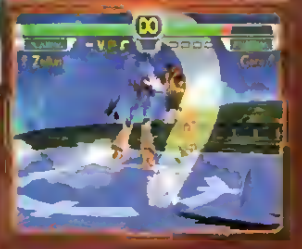






here, zooming up close to reveal the victim's crumpled form while darkening the stage set!







Each character comes to the crusade with a large array of special fighting techniques. They are a mixture of classic *Street Fighter* style moves along with button combinations similar to *Soul Edge*. These commands combined with the Plasma combo give each character at least 30 different attacks. The completion of certain Plasma combos can produce unique versions of an individual's basic commands. The picture above reveals Gore's combo variation of his Poison Scatter. You can only get this attack by successfully completing the specific Plasma Combo. Discover yet more in practice mode.

BASIC FIGHT COMMANDS OF THE STAR GLADIATORS

HAYATO FIGHTING COMMANDS

RED SPARROW DANCE	A, A, A, A
PURPLE LIGHTNING	↓ ↘ → + B, B
WOLF FANG	→ + K, K
ARK MOON	From behind A
TWO DRAGONS	While running B, B
WHITE TIGER CANNON	→ ← + K
FLYING SWALLOW	K + G, A or B
ASHURA	↓ x 3

JUNE FIGHTING COMMANDS

METEORIC SHOWER	K, K, K, K
TWINKLE ELBOW	↓ ↘ → + A, K
SUMMERSAULT KICK	↓ ↑ + K
MOONSAULT KICK	From behind K, K + G
DOUBLE COMET KICK	↓ ↙ ← + K, K
NORTH STAR COMBO	← → + B, K
CAMEL CLUTCH	While opponent is on the ground → ← + K
ONE-HANDED SIDE ROLL	↓ ↙ ← + K + G

GERELT FIGHTING COMMANDS

LIGHTNING SCARLET	A, A, A, A
SOUTHERN ARROW	↓ ↘ → + A, K
ANDARCIA STORM	→ ↘ ↓ ↙ ← + A
BLOODY FLAMENCO	↘ + K, ← + K
SPANISH DANCE	← ← + A, A, A
FLYING MATADOR	← → + K + A
KICK DEL SOL	While running K + G
SOF	While opponent is on the ground → ← + K

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

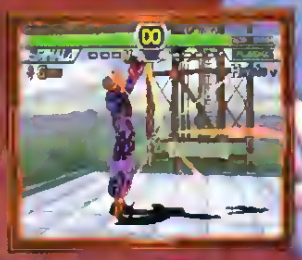
AVAILABLE - 4TH QUARTER



CHIEF HAMBLETON
Capcom stomps into the 3D fighting arena!

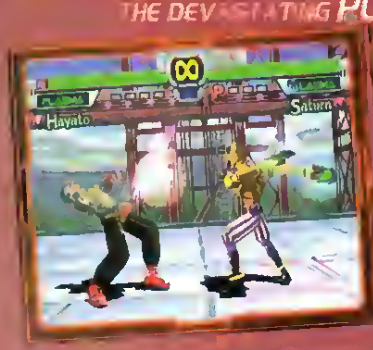
BASIC TECHNIQUE 3 - PLASMA COMBO





Upon entering Training mode, each fighter can practice their combination attacks; essentially a set of linked attacks that can be mixed and matched to suit a player's needs. When in combat, combinations of up to five hits can be created, and with the necessary skill your enemy can be sent reeling by the full force of such a display. The technique of the Plasma Combo takes a little time to master, and it helps to watch your Plasma bar (below your character energy) and continue the next portion of your combo once the initial attacks have appeared in this bar. In addition to these attacks, each character has one ultimate move; the Final Plasma Combination; a five-hit monster combo with an awesome finishing stroke to rent your foe asunder! Splitch!!

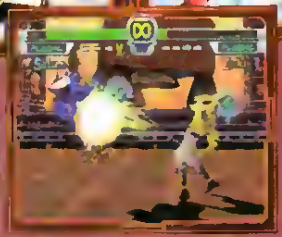
SEQUENCE 3 SATURN HITS HOME WITH THE DEVASTATING PLASMA COMBO













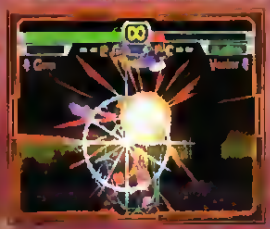
Capcom's new foray into the realm of 3D fighting has finally begun; and what a game to stake their abilities with! As you may have gathered by my excited burblings last issue; I was more than a little amazed by the programming prowess displayed by the team responsible for this PlayStation smash; everything looked and felt like a Grade A arcade title, and I was playing it at home! So with weeks of cyber-sword slashing under my belt, does this stand up to the might of other PlayStation titles? You'd better believe it does!!

Immediately obvious is the time Capcom has spent on



THE ULTIMATE GAMEFAN REVIEW OF STAR GLADIATOR





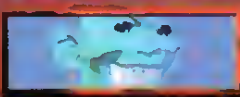


the motion-captured animation of the characters; from the graceful June to the lumbering Gamof, you'll gasp at the movement and wince as each crunching attack hits home. Those already familiar with *Soul Edge* should have no problem adjusting to this futuristic version of the game, as *Star Gladiator* has a superficial feeling of similarity, due to the 30fps action and the 3D backgrounds; but playability-wise, *Star Gladiator* had a whole heap of



GAMOF FIGHTING COMMANDS

GAMO SPECIAL COMBO	B, B, B, B
GAMO TORNADO	➡ ⬅ + B, B, B
GAMO VICTORY	➡ + K, A
GAMO HOME RUN	⬇ ↘ ➡ + K, B
GAMO SCREW	➡ ↘ ⬇ ↙ ⬅ + A
GAMO GIANT SWING	From Behind ➡ ↘ ⬇ ↙ ⬅ + A
GAMO RAGE COMBO	↘ + K, B
FORWARD ROLL	⬇ ↙ ⬅ + K + G



SATURN FIGHTING COMMANDS

JACK IN THE BOX	B, B, B, B
ROLLER COASTER	A, A, A
FIRECRACKER	⬅ ➡ + B
TOP SPIN	⬇ ↘ ➡ + B
ACROBAT COMBO	⬇ ↙ ⬅ + B, B, B
TRAPEZE COMBO	⬇ ↘ ➡ + A, A
TAPPING ATTACK	⬅ ➡ + B
DOUBLE SURPRISE	➡ + K, A



VECTOR FIGHTING COMMANDS

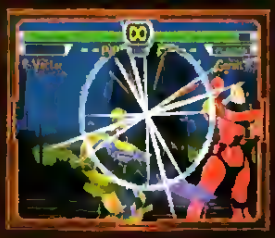
CRAZY CHAINSAW	B, B, B, B
KILLING PROCEDURE	A, A, A
HORIZONTAL LASER	⬇ ↘ ➡ + B
UPPER BEAM BAZOOKA	➡ + A
LOWER BEAM BAZOOKA	➡ + A
LEG IMPACT	➡ + K, K
VERTICAL LASER	While facing away from opponent A
LAST SHOOTING	While standing from behind A

IS THIS THE FUTURE FOR ALL CAPCOM FIGHTING GAMES?

different tactics to employ.

Before touching on these gameplay elements, I've just got to return to those backgrounds: This is a first for the PlayStation; you've never seen backgrounds as detailed and seemingly real as these; and that's not all, because behind the fight, the scenic features actually move while the battle takes place! You'll actually stop fighting to watch a couple of space cruisers dogfighting (in 3D!), and other stages feature zero-G space debris and even a flamingoss! Credit to Capcom for spending that extra time sculpting the backdrops into believable settings; they could so easily have turned into blocky, mock-3D tragedies (them, best not mention *Toshinden 2* at this point).

Once you've set down to slap your cyber-opponent about a bit, you'll soon discover that all the








characters are extremely accessible (as well as looking like a real bunch of badass mercenaries from the wrong side of Mos Eisley), and features a load of stunning light-sourced and sparkling moves, complete with the motion blur that accompanies every new 3D beat-'em-up these days. Although not as deep as the likes of *Virtua Fighter 2*, *Star Gladiator* is still extreme fighting, and should have you glued to your PlayStation for weeks at a time. As you can see, some of the more difficult moves are stunning to view, and despite a limited floating potential, the combo system is novel and works really well, rounding off this awesome debut from the masters of the 2D. This has an excellent learning curve, no over-balanced characters and a couple of secret folks (shown last issue), and all combine to provide the PlayStation owner (and arcade-goer) with a beautiful, highly playable and extremely polished fighter.

YOURS FAITHFULLY, THE CHIEF






MORE INCREDIBLE STAR GLADIATOR COVERAGE NEXT ISSUE
FEATURES INCLUDE PROFILES AND THE HIDDEN FIGHTERS!



RIMGAL
FIGHTING COMMANDS

EARTHQUAKE	K, K, K, K
DINOFLAME	↓ ↘ → + K
LANDSLIDE KICK	← → + K
DOUBLE VOLCANO KICK	↓ ↙ ← + K, K
CRAZY WAVE	→ → + B, B, B.....
LOWER DINO FLAME	While long or mid ground ↓ ↘ → + K
LEG BITE	While long or mid ground K
LONG BACK DASH	→ ← + K + G



ZELKIN
FIGHTING COMMANDS

BLUE TYPHOON	K, K, K, K
CONDOR WHEEL	A, A, A
FIRE WHEEL COMBO	↘ + A, K
AIR WHEEL	From behind K, K.....
THUNDER WHEEL COMBO	← → + B, K
1. SUPER JUMP	↓ ↑ then ↑ ↑
SKY DESTRUCTION	During 1. ↓ + K
AIR JAVELIN	During 1. ↓ + A



GORE
FIGHTING COMMANDS

COMPLETE PRESCRIPTION	B, B, B, B
COMPOSITION CHANGE	↓ ↘ → + B
POISON SCATTER	↓ ↘ → + A
1. ABSOLUTE REST	↓ + K + G
OSCILLATION TREATMENT	During 1. A + B
LEG ROLL	During 1. ← → + B, K
MAGNIFICATION CHANGE	↓ x 2
INTERNAL ORGAN CHANGE	↓ ↙ ← K, K, K

Carnage Heart

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ASTROMA
PUBLISHER - SCEA
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED
AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER

At first glance, *Carnage Heart* seems to be your typical military strategy game... You design units, have your factories manufacture them, invest in future technologies, and plot the domination of Jupiter's moons. But *Carnage Heart* takes the genre a big step further, allowing you to design the very software that drives your mechs.

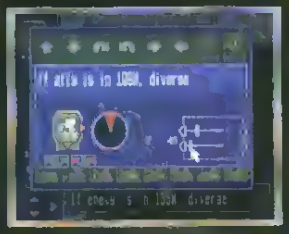
Of course, you can allow the computer to design it for you, but that's like playing *Street Fighter* and having the computer handle your special moves. To truly enjoy *Carnage Heart*, you'll need to learn and master its own graphic-based programming language, and design your own mechs from both the inside and out. It sounds hard... and it is. But it can be extremely rewarding if you take the time to get into it. And really, it isn't that hard to pick up. The "chips" that make up each program are mostly just simple movements, attacks, and radar scans. But depending on how they're linked, you can end up with either a brilliant killing machine that masterfully dodges enemy fire while seeking out and efficiently destroying his foes, or a glitch-ridden pile of scrap metal that blindly walks into walls and accidentally destroys his own teammates with friendly fire. You can get really fancy, too, designing your robots to work as a well-organized team, or so I assume... when I see those chips, with such baffling descriptions as "If channel is 1, send black signal," I have a sudden uncontrollable impulse to panic, switch off the PlayStation, and watch *CHiPS* reruns. I guess I'm not quite ready for that one yet.

We don't have the menual or any documentation on *Carnage Heart* yet, so I'm afraid I can't go into depth on the campaign mode yet. There are a ton of options aveilable, but I can't quite figure out what to do, so you'll have to wait for future articles before we can report on that aspect. Until then, I'll give you a quick rundown of the software mode, something to baffle and confuse you until you get the game and learn the proper way, by trial and error. Even if it's based only on the software design aspect, I can confidently report that strategy fans, computer nerds, *Magic: The Gathering* addicts and MENSA members definitely have something worth looking forward to in *Carnage Heart*. **T**



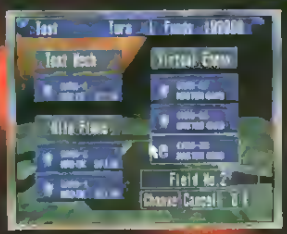
You creete your program by seffing chips (of which there are 49 different kinds) on e square grid. The arrows determine the path the information wilf travet, and, end each chip has verious tields thaf can be modified tor your intended purposes.





A mech with no program wifl just sfand fhere and do nothing. You'll need to progrem everything from simple routines (to fook tor enemies, move, and shoot) to more complex ones (to detect obstacles in your line of fire, to avoid shooting at your own effies, to dodge enemy ffre, etc). Oece you have the basics down, you can gef even more detailed, programming them fo conserve ammo, seff-destruct when low on health (and an enemy's nearby), end fo work together es e team. You cen increase the maximum size of your programs end the speed et which your mech executes them by developing and purchesing better CPUs.



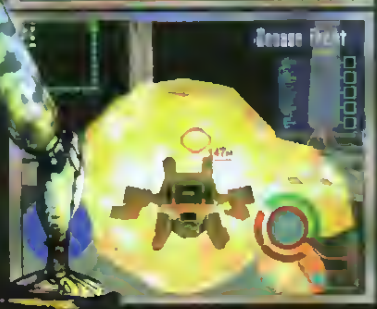


When you have a completed design, you can test it in the erenas, and see where it needs improvements. So you know where the flaws are, the game displays your program es the mech cycfes through if, in the upper-left hand corner of the screen.









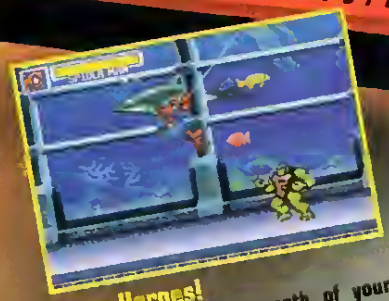


Flex Some 16-Bit Muscle





More Challenges!
Face a life and death hunt to locate six Infinity Gems before Thanos. The fate of the world depends on you.



More Heroes!
Master the brute strength of your favorite Super Hero – Spider-Man, Wolverine, Iron Man, Captain America, and the Incredible Hulk.



More Super Villains!
Battle fiendish hordes assembled by Thanos, including Blackheart, Dr. Doom and the diabolical owl clones of The Thing, Silver Surfer, Vision and a dozen others.

MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ IN

WAR OF THE GEMS™

FLEX MORE 16-BIT MUSCLE!
The most powerful collection of Marvel Super Heroes unite to battle a multitude of treacherous villains on your Super NES! It's an incredible action-adventure demanding your skill, cunning and might to defeat the forces of evil and Thanos' quest for power.

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TOBAL TRULY IS NUMBER ONE!

THE HOT FIGHTING TITLE FROM SQUARE!

With a number of weeks of gamepiay under my belt, I can finally review Square's first forey into the field of 3D beat-'em-ups, and for the most part, I agree entirely with Nick's enthusiasm expressed last issue (Vol. 4 Iss. 10). This is a more-than-worthy addition to any gamer's fighting library, and an excellent way for Square to start their PlayStation games rolling before the biggie (*FFVII*) stomps into view. Being a Namco man myself, I was most interested to see exactly how well this measured up against the PlayStation's best beat-'em-up (*Tekken 2*), and the number one Saturn fighter (*VF2*), especially as developers from both these titles worked on *Tobal No. 1*. Let's limber up for some fisticuffs, shall we?

There's a whole load of differences between this and 'other' fighting games which mark this as being somewhat special. First of all, there's the introduction, a CG delight showing all eight competitors limbering up before engaging in bouts of slapping. This is professionally rendered animation, and up there with the likes of *Tekken 2* as a fine way to introduce the characters before the pugilistic punch-fest. Once the title screen has been negotiated, and you're into the actual bouts, you'll get to grips with the fighting system itself, which is a curious mixture of styles (touching on *Tekken*, *Virtua Fighter* and *Toshinden*) with a bucketful of original features thrown in for good measure. Most original is the way the different characters move around their foe, as up and down move you into or out of the screen, and not towards or away. This initially takes a lot of getting used to (unless you've never played a 3D fighter before), but soon proves to be an innovative step and adds greatly to the depth of your game. Once you've grown accustomed to this and other additional features, you've got a highly realistic and deep fighter. As Nick already stated, the grapple system is another



GREN KUTS

UNDEFEATED MARTIAL ARTIST

• Height 175cm • Weight 72kg • Age: 17
• Place of Birth: Earth • Sex: Male

The youngest ever [illegible] martial arts champion, [illegible] years old, [illegible] undefeated martial artist [illegible] with an intellect to match his formidable but friendly, and views Mary Ivonskaya as his foremost rival.

His main tactic is to link pinpoint sharp attacks together into devastating combos. His throws are excellent, but his main strength is his rapid attacks that are so difficult to block. Small, but powerful.









MARY IVONSKAYA

A WILD AND REFINED SUPER PRO-WRESTLER

• Height 183cm • Weight 140kg • Age: 32
• Place of Birth: Earth • Sex: Female

A mother who emigrated from Earth with her three year-old child and joined the tournament in order to test her strength and win the prize. She defeated the men in Earth's mixed-gender super pro-wrestling league to gain the seat of champion. Her build is unimaginable and exquisite, but this Russian-French woman has a hidden gentle side, and is prone to tears.

She possesses the many intense-filled techniques of a pro-wrestler, and has some degree of speed, and is an ideal character to begin with. Because she has many [illegible] techniques, you'll need to rush in to attack and grapple when you're right next to the opponent. She definitely can't lose in terms of sheer power, and is one of the game's finest fighters.





All artwork © 1996 Square.













FEI-PUSU

ELDER WARRIOR AND EX-TOBAL CHAMPION

• Height: 161cm • Weight: 55kg • Age: ?
• Place of Birth: Earth • Sex: Male

Hom's master, and an ancient Earthling from Taiwan, he became only the second fighter ever to beat Emperor Udan in the main Tobal contest. As a prize, he received a large quantity of Mahmoran Ore (estimated worth: $200 million), but still lives a life of humility for reasons of his own.

A technical character with every type of attack at his disposal. Rather sluggish, but if you can think quick enough to match the right attack to a fighting situation, he'll show you incredible power.

marvellous addition to your fisting fun, with each character having a full complement of grapples which can be reversed... and then reversed again by the initial grappler! How cool is that!

The excellence doesn't end there, either, as Square has added little realistic touches to enhance your combat action. A character receiving a hit is a prime example, as they sway backwards when hit, and stagger after a low hit. This is the very finest motion capture, and adds considerably to this fighter's aesthetics, and means there's no need for 'hit explosions'; Square are obviously going for realism in a very big way. To complete the ensemble, *Tobal No. 1*'s music is delightful and distinct, and almost up there with Namco's finest.

So, this is the perfect fighter then? Well nearly, but not quite... There's a few problems which I personally found detracted from the game. Despite the resolution being astounding and the frame rate running at a constant 60fps, the game controls like a 30fps game; there's really no special moves that take advantage of this increased frame rate. And while I'm on this negative vibe, those graphics



CHUJI-WU

THE ALL-PURPOSE KENPO MASTER

• Height: 175cm • Weight: 70kg • Age: 17
• Place of Birth: Earth • Sex: Male

The Earthling son of a New Chinese father and Japanese mother, he lost both of his parents at a young age, and now lives with his stepfather and sister. His meditation means he's a master at controlling his own body.

A good all-around fighter who has the power to face any opponent on an equal basis, and can fend off attacks from any other opponent with ease. Because he has many techniques with strong destructive force, he can instantly reverse a losing fight, and can react to an opponent's openings, no matter how brief. A wide variety of moves and great flexibility are Chuji's strong points.

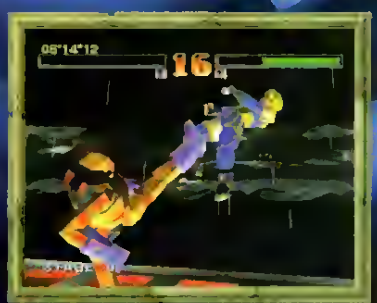


REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - DREAM FACT.
PUBLISHER - SQUARE
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1 OR 2
DIFFICULTY - MODERATE
AVAILABLE - DECEMBER

THE FIGHTING ACTION IS UNEQUALLED! ONLY ON THE PLAYSTATION!









CHIEF HAMBLETON
CAN THIS TOP *TEKKEN 2*? TURN OVER TO FIND OUT!

uld be more detailed (yeah, I like my polygons texture-mapped, I'm afraid), and the characters don't really have enough charisma to hold my interest for long. But, hey, other GF staffers reelly dig that crazy flapping chicken dude! But me? I prefer my fighters with more character...

Now, perhaps it's because this game is so fast and deep (and comes from Square) that I've searched *hard* for a few negative points to throw in, but when you look at the overall game itself, this is an astounding achievement, and one piece of software which should be in every self-respecting gamer's collection. This should be bought without hesitation and played until your fingers bleed. Another triumph from the Squere stable.

Of course, the kings of the RPG couldn't let out their first fighter without including e mini-RPG in the bargain, as the options include choosing the Quest mode. This pits you egainst all manner of strange horrors in a corridor-based maze, with much to find and little room for sloppy fighting. Think of this mode as another *Tobal* game and you'll soon realize thet not only hes Square delivered a highly original beat-'em-up, but they've given you a really cool maze quest as well! There are four different mazes to wender

HOM

INDUSTRIAL ROBOT WITH COMBAT SKILLS

• Height: 180cm • Weight: 150kg • Age: 20
• Place of Birth: Tobal • Sex: ?

Although formerly a mindless robot with some semblance of intelligence, he was deeply impressed by Fei Pusu's performance in the 6th Tobal tournament, and became his disciple, studying his technique religiously. Although most people view him as incredibly serious and dedicated, (due to his 17 years of continuous training), a memory failure meant he unfortunately spent most of this time forgetting the techniques he just learned.

This character uses surprise as a weapon, and is able to suck away at his foes with unpredictable attacks. His movements are very unique, especially for a robot. However, all of his moves leave big openings, and an opponent that could accurately read him would be able to deliver crushing counter attacks. Pay very close attention to your timing when you begin an attack, and you may yet win!



















EPON

BEAUTIFUL FIGHTER WITH BURNING SPIRIT

• Height: 167cm • Weight: 50kg • Age: 18
• Place of Birth: Kitzak • Sex: Female

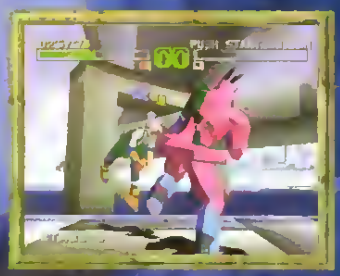
Despite her appearance as a small but perfectly formed Earthling, Epon is a Kitzakian, from one of Tobal's moons. She has a calm, quiet nature, but possesses awesome power when provoked into a battle. Her past is shrouded in secrecy, and her appearance at the tournament has shocked her friends.

Her small and nimble form allows fast hitting attacks. Her hits are not particularly strong, especially compared to some of the lumbering giants, but her speed quite certainly covers for this. Because some of her throws have such bone-crunching power, they can consume victims if used at the right time.

THE QUEST MODE ROCKS!

BEAT IT AND PLAY AS THE BOSS FIGHTERS!

 All artwork © 1996 Square.





through, and they can serve either as a game in their own right, or experience at perfecting your battle skills in the fighting ring.

You should concentrate on some serious powering up, as the mazes are very tricky indeed, but when completed, they yield the bosses of the game (there's that devilishly tricky final dungeon to explore which reveals another competitor...), with over twenty different types of monster to fight, items to pick up and throw, potions to drink (careful of the poison and max. life down!) and various tricks to learn. Watch your defense and attack skills rise after eating certain items, and prepare yourself for some serious bobbing and weaving when the next assailant hoves into view! By the time you've eventually completed all the different dungeons, your character should emerge highly skilled in the ways of the warrior. What better way to improve your fighting potential than by questing?

We'll be back next month with another bout of *Tobal* (bosses this time), so until then... put up your dukes! **CH**

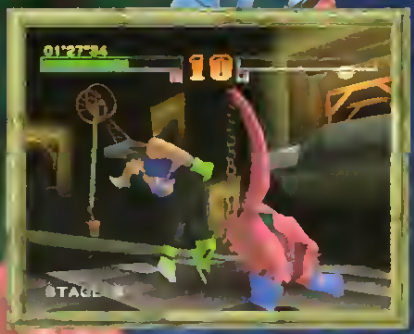
ILL-GOGA

FIGHTING FOR A WOMAN WITH BRUTAL POWER

- Height: 201cm • Weight: 180kg • Age: ?
- Place of Birth: Wakoibayai • Sex: Male

This giant resides on Wakoibayai, Tobal's smallest moon. His element is [illegible] Wakoibayai's girl found with the strength [illegible] that would win him her hand in marriage. To afford such a treasure, he has entered the tournament hoping to win the extravagant prize on offer. His personality matches his appearance, but surprisingly, his favorite hobby is reading.

Ill Goga's fighting style is characterized by his overwhelming power and awesome bulk. His movements are quite slow, but by just landing an attack on his opponent, Ill Goga has the power to determine the battle's pace. The most visible show of his power is in his throws, which are more than a match for any character, and should be employed at the earliest opportunity.











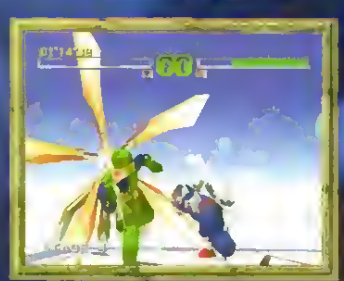
OLIEMS

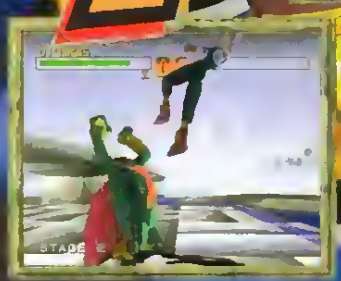
A KIND AND KNOWLEDGEABLE FIGHTING GIANT

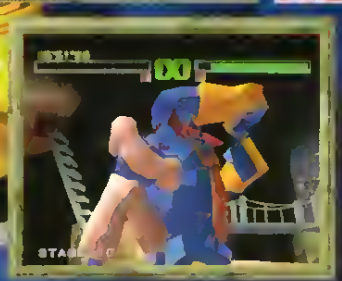
- Height: 198cm • Weight: 110kg • Age: 19
- Place of Birth: Kientakk • Sex: Male

Oliems was born on Tobal, but is actually an alien [illegible] Kientakkians. They look hostile, but are naturally gentle and peace-loving. Because Kientakkians are gladly and wisely advise anyone, whatever their troubles [illegible] they're regarded by Earthlings with great respect. Oliems is the father of two children and [illegible]. He favors freshly picked earthworms.

Oliems is a strong fighter and well equipped to handle both powerful and fast attackers. Because of his full complement of punch attacks, he can fight effectively even when he's left with no openings. However, his punches have a very short range and they're not easy to score with. As a competent fighter should use control, and back them up with his variety of throws.









TOBAL No.1

FORMULA 1







The shining star of PlayStation quality software, Liverpool-based Psygnosis, has delivered yet another stunning title for those desiring professionally crafted PlayStation releases. As the video game world knows, these people know how to make driving games, so it was with great relish that I followed the progress of Bizarre Creations' baby as they attempted to devise the definitive Formula One racing game. After a year of waiting, the time has finally come; I could re-enact any of the races from the 1995 F1 season on any one of 17 (yes, you read that correctly) different courses from around the globe!

Let me stress from the very beginning that *F1* is a game for everyone, whether they're after the arcade thrills of ramming million-dollar race cars off a track at 120 mph without landing in a crumpled heap, or refining their pride and joy and competing in a 70 lap race where one slight error will send you spinning. You want options? You'll be wading through the *F1* preferences for weeks! There's an alternative selection for almost every conceivable situation: Control your car with a plastic steering wheel? No problem! Change the down-force of your rear wings? You got it! The fun doesn't end there, either; go for a single race (choose any track) or the whole 1995 championship (providing you've got a month to spare), and then change the weather, car damage, collisions, duel or full 26 car line-up. After this, there's the small matter of driver selection from the 35 official drivers (Mansell, Shumacher, Coulthard)...



GRAND PRIX MODE

COMPETE IN ALL 17 CHAMPIONSHIP COURSES AROUND THE WORLD!

RACE 70+ LAPS JUST LIKE THE REAL THING!

SUPERB HANDLING AND CAR DYNAMICS ADD TO THE REALISM!

CAR VULNERABILITY MAKES SAFE DRIVING ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS!



Once the quest to complete the option screens has been negotiated and you've changed almost every conceivable feature (yes, there's even a Dolby Pro Logic feature in here!), the race itself can begin. This is where you strap yourself in and prepare for the ultimate in Formula One thrills! Immediately you can tell the amount of care and attention (not to mention time) that Bizarre Creations have spent texture-mapping the track to perfection; each course weighs at between 60 000 and 90 000 polygons, and despite some slight pop-up, this is among the most pleasing visual feasts I've witnessed on a next-generation machine. Other racing games can hide pop-up by twisting the corners and placing obstructing hills in the way (*Impact Racing* tries this and *still* manages disastrous pop-up), but because these are exact replicas of existing tracks, the PlayStation game libraries have been taken to their limit in pursuit of pop-up perfection...





ARCADE MODE

LESS REALISTIC BUT MORE FUN! EMPHASIS ON SPEED AND EXCITEMENT!

COMPETE AGAINST YOUR OPPONENTS WHILE THE CLOCK TICKS DOWN!

YOU CAN'T BE DAMAGED SO SMACK OTHER CARS FROM THE FARMAC, RUDDY!













OPTIONS-TASTIC!

CUSTOMIZE YOUR CAR IN EVERY WAY!

ADJUST STEERING, BRAKING AND DOWN-FORCE ON FRONT AND REAR WINGS!

SELECT A TEAM AND DRIVER FROM THE 1995 FORMULA ONE SEASON!

SELECT A GAME MODE FROM GRAND PRIX, ARCADE AND TWO-PLAYER DUEL!

SELECT A CIRCUIT FROM 17 COURSES!

Your car handles exactly like you'd expect a multi-million dollar racer's dream to; there's no powersliding here, just supreme judgment and careful use of the game's multiple camera angles (ranging from up-close tarmac effects to a blimp's-eye view). Once you're familiar with the in-game car manipulation, you'd better start employing some winning race strategies; those CPU cars are the most intelligent ever seen! Some will actively weave in front of you as you try and pass them while others slipstream you in a most devious manner! This is absolutely the greatest challenge ever seen in PlayStation racing; I personally took apart *Wipeout XL* in two days, but I won't be finished with *F1* any time in the foreseeable future!



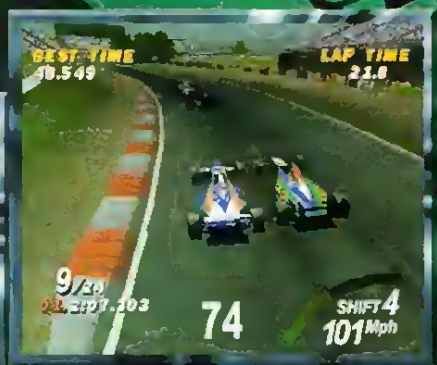


There's the music to consider here as well. Those tired of techno will be happy to listen to the guitar plucking of Steve Vai and Joe Satriani as they race around Silverstone, Monte Carlo or Hockenheim. This is definitely a rocker's paradise, and an interesting change from the usual dance beats (although I'm rather partial to a spot of *Prodigy* myself). However, you can always forego the riffs in favor of commentary by world renowned F1 expert Murray Walker (Er, yes, a bald bloke who's only famous in the UK). Fortunately, his brand of wit doesn't get *that* grating or repetitive and adds to the tension somewhat (and you can always switch him off!). Finally, you can always hook a couple of PlayStations together and go at it with the link-up two-player mode; another joy from the guys at Psygnosis that really shows their commitment to all facets of the game.



Everything about this title oozes professionalism and hard work, and thankfully the result is a highly playable racing title with a huge longevity, impressive graphics and great sound. It'll appeal more to the F1 enthusiast and simulation racing fan rather than those craving arcade action, but you certainly can't fault *F1* for omitting any factors! This is utterly absorbing racing that'll keep you hooked for months at a time... ***CH***





REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - PSYGNOSIS

PUBLISHER - PSYGNOSIS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - DIFFICULT

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



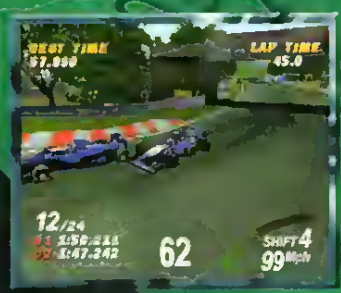
CHIEF HAMBLETON

THE KINGS OF THE RACING GENRE, WHO BROUGHT YOU *WIPEOUT* AND *DESTRUCTION DERBY* NOW ARRIVE WITH THEIR NEW BABY... BUT IS IT THE CORRECT FORMULA FOR SUCCESS? YOU BETCHA!!









25 grisly minutes of full motion 3D animation. Slaughter your enemies as a Vampire then morph to a wolf, escaping into the dead of night

Butcher villagers or turn them into festering pools of decaying flesh with one of 22 demented magics. It will take you more than 100 hours of adventure to destroy those who damned you, but you'll get them. Every last bloody one.



MATURE
M
AGES

Forever. It is a black and dreadful place. Where the undead feast on the living

ETERNAL DAMNATION LEAVES PLENTY OF TIME TO PLAN YOUR REVENGE

to survive. Welcome to Crystal Dynamic's Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain. Whether you choose the body of man, the form of wolf or the cloak of mist, the search for and annihilation of those who damned you is your only purpose.



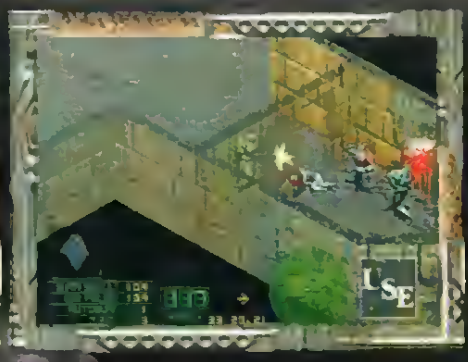
Explore the carnage at www.crystald.com

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PlayStation

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS







PROJECT OVERKILL

REVIEW

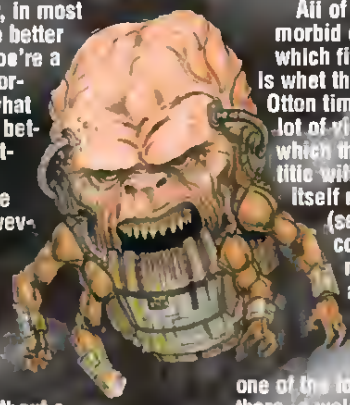




In terms of gameplay *Project Overkill* is best described as a next generation derivative of the 16-bit age. And as far as I'm concerned, therein lies one of its strongest selling points. Nowadays, 3D polygon worlds seem to be engulfing the whole of gaming. Traditional game designs however, in most cases make for a better game. Unless you're a programming overlord improving what already works is better than re-inventing the wheel. *Overkill* takes it a step further, however, beyond "improvement" to near perfection. How, you ask? Well, that is what I'm here to tell you.

Overkill is, without a doubt, the most violent video game currently available. We are swimming in blood here, my friends. When you shoot someone (or something), they don't just groan and disappear, oh no. Your projectile enters (splat) and... exits (splatter). Fleshly animated blood bursts into the air landing realistically around the now limp dead body, and there it stays, a silent sign of the mayhem you've caused. Should you walk through a puddle of blood, as you move away, bloody footprints follow... *Eeeeew!*

All of this adds a particularly morbid overtone to the game, which fits it well. I believe this is what they call "A man's game." Often times, when a game has a lot of violence, it's a gimmick on which the company hopes the title will ride, while the game itself may be quite the turd (see *Time Killers*). Of course, Konami will have none of this and has created an environment vast and richly deserving of inspection.



Project Overkill is also one of the longest 32-bit games out there, a welcome feature courtesy of a long lead time, careful planning and a company who cares. There are over 50 stages, each possessing enough length and diversity to be considered a mini-game onto itself. Every one is teeming with enemies, many of whom you can leave or actually hunt down, having completed your objective (ooh, that is nasty). Hey, it's a video game, kill 'em all! Secret areas are available by careful inspection and render vital

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - KONAMI

PUBLISHER - KONAMI

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - NOW



E. STORY

BLISTERING ACTION AS ONLY KONAMI CAN.











items nnndnd for survival. Yoa do *not* want to run oat of ammo in *Overkill*. This is a big part of thn gama's strategy. Go in blasting lika a madman nnd it's over buddy... yar doad. The trick is to alart them ot your presanca, wait aroand a cornar, and ns thay assali, take 'am oaf one by ona as thay approach. Piln 'nm high! Tasks ranga from simpla things lika dropping in and nliminating ns mnny enamy froops as possibla, to ratrlaving countnrstrike information and uploading it to your dropship's computer. Four different characters (boings is more lika it) with thnir own strengths and woaknassos, aro at your disposal. Each carries five unique torms of weaponry. Losa one during n mission and back yoa go. Try anothar! You havn only lour, treat thnm well. *Ovorkill*'s soundtrack helps drag you into this mad world. As tha situation intensifins, so does thn music. Much like an nction tlick, ns tha plot thicknns, so doas thn music, nnd vary good music it is. *Overkill* leaves littla fo critiqua, excnpt for thn control. Of coursn control is n vnry big thing, so i will omphnsize. Theso amazing looking littla baasts are randnrnd bnautins, thnrotore, strafing, shoald it exist as wn know it, would look mighty lame. So, instead ot strafing yoa get mildly complex controls. Triangle shoots up; Squarn, laft; Circla, right; and X, down. Shoofing diagonnlly is pnrformed by holding down two af a fima. Doing so whiln mobilo will lock your gan into placa.

Instinctivaly, yoa'll entnr nnch area going straight at thn nnnmy, and ultimatoly, gaf torn apart. You'll soon laarn by necnssity how *Ovorkill* works. If takns a liffla tima to dial in but onen you do, you're in it. And crawling insida this gnma is a long fan rida. Strating, ala *Loaded* would hava made *Overkill* just another shooter, which I'm happy it's not. This game conjurns up mamories of *Metal Gaar*, n game from thn days of 8-bll that i lovod. I'm happy Konami chosa tha rnalistic approach, but f do warn, this gnmn is tor advancad plnyers. Lika wn'vn always said here at GamaFan, if it snys Konami on thn box, thora's quailty insidn, nnd with tha advent of tha next gnnnra-tion all around us, that has nnver changnd. Yoa can rely on Konami. ***ES***





SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD



REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - VIRGIN

PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



E. STORM
SPOT WOULON'T SURVIVE IN THE HOLLYWOOD I KNOW.

You wake up post-Conan, walk downstairs into the kitchen, and getting yourself a bowl (or trough) of cereal (preferably Captain Crunch), sit down at the table. As you go to pour the milk, you notice the sad little picture of 32-bit Spot on the side of the milk carton. Well, that milk must be expired, because here he is!

Though it took quite a bit of time, Spot has finally made his entrance into the world of the 32-bit console gaming... Hi Spot, nice to see you.

As the game loads up, and the opening cinema rolls, you'll begin to understand why *Spot* took so long. This game has one of the highest quality FMV intros ever produced for a video game. It amazed us all. It is, for the most part, that which you would see in a theater, sitting in the dark, probably behind the world's only 8ft. popcorn chompin' momma. Here is much better. The intro sets the stage for poor Spot who, dropped off in his limo, must fend for himself amongst the Hollywood movie sets he's been warped in to.



The in-game graphics too, are quite spectacular. Each enemy is a hand drawn, traditionally animated sprite. They're toons. They stand out well against the pre-rendered backdrops, which are stiff and lifeless for the most part with no warping and little parallax. They're pretty though, that's the trade-off.



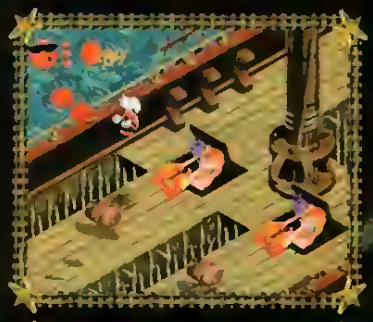
The gameplay in *SPOT* is isometric platforming in its most basic form. You run, jump and shoot carbonation at enemies. That's all you do. That's all Spot ever does. But, this time, you do so only when Spot's walking. The designers have broken up the action nicely. Spot now flies in his very own shooter, and (you gotta' love this) rides a Big-Wheel! Remember those? If he was smart he'd take off the seat and ride scooter style. I guess he doesn't have time with a T-Rex on his butt (does Spot have a butt?). The token mining cart ride is in here as well. Of course there's bosses to deal with too, and they're pretty nasty. Some are hand drawn, some are rendered, but they're all distinctly 32-bit in





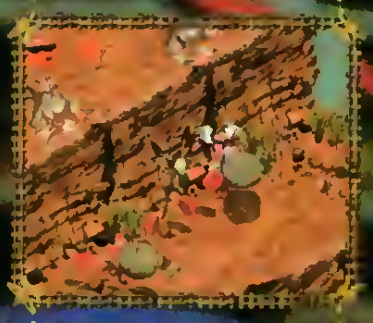






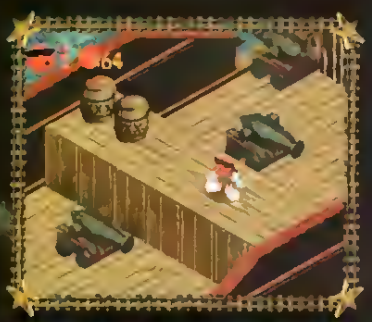
















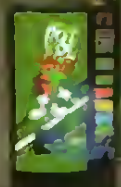












size. I guess what I'm getting at is that *SPOT* is a finely produced piece of software. But wait, there is a fly in the ointment... there almost always is. In this case Spots gameplay is the culprit. Not that the gameplay is bad, it's definitely not. There's plenty to explore as you gather spots. Warps lead to awesome rooms, there's plenty of platforming happening, and a burning hot Tommy Tallarico soundtrack billows greatness in the background. The gameplay is however, very basic in contrast to the rest of the game. There's really nothing revolutionary about it, but then, does there have to be? Simplistic gameplay was never a drawback before, so why should it be now? I guess that depends on your individual taste. This is one of 32-bit's virtues. There is now enough variety for everyone. Whether you're looking for an old fashioned isometric action game ('cept with drop-dead visuals) or, on the reverse side of the spectrum, a highly complex simulator, there's a game in the PS arsenal for you. This one is the former, basic but beautiful.

Spot's only real flaw lies in his floaty feel amongst the isometric landscapes. Once you get beyond this, *Spot* is an exercise in platforming prowess. As usual, watch the shadows! Before closing I must again mention the soundtrack. It's better than most movie scores you bear in your local theater, but along those lines. Tommy T. continues to grow as an artist. His music makes a game *better*. We'll have a look at the Saturn *Spot Goes to Hollywood* in the December GameFan. ***ES***



DESTROY ALL RESISTANCE... CRUSH THE OPPOSITION...
CHAINGUN INNOCENT CIVILIANS... THAT IS THE AIM OF...



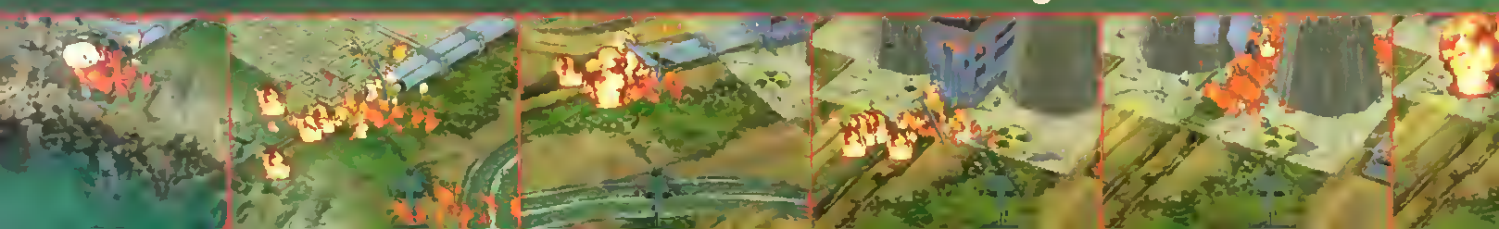
SOVIET STRIKE

The near legendary *Strike* series is finally hitting 32-bit screens. Although originally planned for release a couple of years ago on the 3DO, *Soviet Strike* is being optimized to take full advantage of the PlayStation's and Saturn's more advanced hardware. As a result, we are finally going to see a fully 3D, rendered version of a game which originally used isometric bit-mapped 2D graphics in the creation of its wartime playfields. What does this mean for fans of the series? From what I've just seen and played, it looks like EA's decision to go for 3D has treated *Soviet Strike* very nicely indeed.

This time around, the plot has you roving the former Soviet Union retrieving hostages, knocking out communications, and generally (like always) blowing everything in your path to atoms. Not only will the new 3D landscapes (and CD storage) enable EA developers to increase the overall size of the game, but it also allows for several new concepts to be explored in the realm of gameplay. The landscapes now flow beneath you, so seeing what's behind a building is as easy as going there (as opposed to an isometric view where everything's hidden till you blow it away). The enemies also take advantage of this by



Mission 4 : Dracula Strike... Mission Target : Nuclear reactor...











moving in reaction to your tactics to intercept and attack, according to the much expanded playfield. This active battlefield scenario is generated by a thoroughly researched AI system - meaning that enemies are no longer the sitting ducks they were in previous *Strike* games. Across five huge missions, be prepared to encounter various Russian rebel armies in any number of shrapnel-throwin' situations, requiring a re-thought strategy at every turn.

Although our preview copy can best be described as "work-in-progress," we were still given a good impression of EA's custom 3D engine (by the 3D crew who worked on *Road Rash* 3DO). There may be only one perspective, a semi-overhead view, but it allows one to see a good distance and is very easy to work with. My opinion is this: if there were a choice of perspectives, you'd probably be playing with this view anyway. The texture-mapped polygonal movement is above average at this point in the preview, and should improve nicely as it nears completion in the coming months. Interestingly, the vast majority of the game's textured polys were compiled based on real life topographical maps and satellite photos, so the geography you're flying over actually exists and is represented accurately. Some clean, well-pieced FMV is used sporadically throughout the game to help move the story along. For example, if you rescue somebody (using your chopper's trusty winch), the game might load up a quick FMV clip explaining your hostage or detailing your next mission.

Being a big fan of the *Strike* series, I am pleased to see the development of *Soviet Strike* moving along nicely. I'm seeing character, plenty of missions, a good lookin' 3D engine, and the usual assortment of massive destruction (Boom! Boom! Yo' dead, suckal). I'm happy to see that this series will continue to be known for its quality. We'll be back soon with a complete review. *G*







PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EA

PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



GLITCH

WITH GAMES LIKE THIS, I NO LONGER HAVE TO FAX MYSELF!







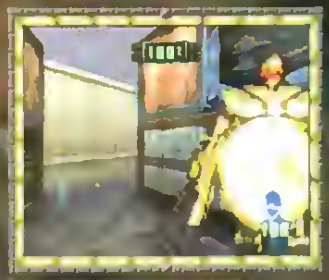


First Mission Objective : Locate the missing operatives...











DISRUPTOR UPDATE

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - UNIVERSAL INT.

PUBLISHER - UNIVERSAL INT.

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - MODERATE

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



CHIEF HAMBLETON ONE HECK OF A PROJECT, BY CRACKY!

You just can't get enough of corridor exploration games (with a huge dollop of entrails, naturally) these days, and *Disruptor* from Universal hopes to take the genre one stage further by employing a number of additions to tempt PlayStation gamers away from their *Doom* diet. Apart from blowing large chunks out of your enemy with the usual array of killing ordinance, your character (a Lightstormer unit from the bad sector of town) has also received a large number of bio-mechanical parts, and is blessed with not-no-lotent psychic powers (Yuri Geller meets RoboCop with a BIG gun).

Evil Lights already extolled this game's virtues back in Volume 4, Issue 6, but the most recent version of the game improves on the already promising gameplay with a whole host of new environments to battle through; from the dead silence of a remote space station (that is, until robotic pirates infiltrate and home in on your location) to the icy cold of a nearby snow planet. These new levels contain much more in the way of detailed scenery; ice structures are actually made up of protruding polygons, and the ground proves to be an ice-rink once you're on the run from the various mechanoids, soldiers and more gibbering entities that inhabit the expansive levels. The other main improvement over games that have gone before is a mix-and-match approach to toe disposal. Take down your enemy with a juicy rotary cannon, and then finish the job with a psionic blast (all this killing takes place in a fully light-sourced environment, naturally). Yeah, this sounds like a Hamblinton game to me!

Insomniac developers are working through the night (ahem) to ensure this game meets the tough criteria set by *Doom* and *PowerSlave*, and providing they can match the ease of control afforded by these two titles; *Disruptor* looks capable of stomping lesser games with a huge bio-mechanical boot. We'll be back to fry some alien brains real soon... ***CH***








DISRUPTOR

STRIKE HARD
STRIKE FAST

STRIKE POINT™



Navigate through 10 different landscapes, destroy everything in your path, and race to save the world from ecological Armageddon. Play Strike Point – the ultimate 3D fighter simulation game available for PlayStation.

PlayStation™

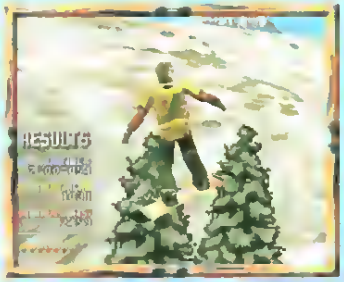
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COOL BOARDERS SPORTS

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER · UEP

PUBLISHER · SONY

FORMAT · CD

OF PLAYERS · 1

DIFFICULTY · INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE · NOVEMBER



CHIP
GIVE ME WHAT I NEED... SPEED!

Besides the Jaguar game *Val d'Isere*, would the next generation get by without a snowboarding game? No way. UEP and EA both have one. UEP's *Cool Boarders* arrives first. A no-brainer, really, since we're looking at the review. I'm impressed that a small Japanese company would take the initiative and produce such a noteworthy game based on a sport from the faraway USA. Shreddin' the slopes and catching major air sure feels good on my PlayStation. Three unique courses – novice, advanced, and expert, each steadily more treacherous, are what stand between you and victory, and by the time you're through with this one, you'll be snowblind and bruised my friend. Baby's got gameplay! Before hittin' the hill, you'll be escorted through the options to grab which ever fashion statement you might wanna make. Six awesome 'boards, each uniquely airbrushed, are also up for your snow carving pleasure. Your board can be chosen in four different colors, and vary from freestyle to downhill. Choose to be male or female (how timely), and you're ready to shred.

All three hills offer hot texture-mapped polygonal terrain and colorful course-side scenery. The frame rate is smooth (around 24 fps), and clipping, almost non-existent. Your crazed 'boarder animates fluidly, drifting and carving realistically. Sharp front or backside carving is performed by the X button. You'll need to master exactly when you need to slow down and dig into sharp turns to keep from bailing. Slower turns mean precious time but chunking off a cliff is much worse, especially if the voice is on. Errr, those taunts, shut-up! Mr. Cliche loves to chime in and see if you can understand what he's saying. Turn him off! I think the programmers in Japan grabbed the first American guy that walked by their office and handed him Mr. Microphone. *Whoa dude, like totally, fifty bucks? Sure.* As much as *Cool Boarders* relies on speed so it does on aerials as well. Prior to a prime precipice, mash and hold the button and then launch! From there your commands wield an assortment of hot aerials. Of course, go for too much and biff! Watch out where the huskies go! The longer you hold, the higher you fly. The steepness of the hill, your speed, and your take-off point all figure into the equation. Could this mean actual depth? Why, yes. You won't be zippin' through *Cool Boarders* in a day. No way. To obtain three cups in each course is to control the snowman, but only true masters will achieve this lofty goal. Next



















COOL BOARDERS

ARE YOU A SHREDDIN' MANIAC OR A LUMP IN THE SNOW?









month we'll detail how to control ol' frosty.

Trophies are awarded in three different categories: Overall Time, Best Trick, and Top Points (a combination ot radness *and* time). You may shoot for any goal, on any course, whenever you feel like it, but you will be rewarded a hot new board if you collect all three on the same course. Earning the upper-class boards is the key to beating the tougher hills. Yet more tun lor you lies in the ghost option. Choose a ghost and your last run is mimicked as you take the next. You know you're gonna beat your best time if you're in front of your prior self. That worked. To top it all off somehow these intense Japanese developers managed to fill the game with *Tim Dale*-like surf tunes, stralght out ot *Beach Blanket Bingo*. Like double cool, bra-ski... we're fer sure there, dude. The PS is like, hot. *C*







DUDE! THERE'S LIKE, A BABE IN THAT TUB. WHOA, BLUE HAIR. TRIPPY.

HOLD THE JUMP BUTTON TO CHARGE AND THEN GO FOR MAXI-MUM AIR! GET MUI TRICK POINTS AND LIKE, WOW DUDE YER HOT!



INCOMING MESSAGE: JUPITER MINING COMPANY VII

REQUEST IMMEDIATE BACK-UP! MAY-DAY! MAY-DAY!

FINAL DOOM

After delivering the finest cansale versian af Daam ever seen, the boys at Williams haven't been exactly twiddling their thumbs over what to develap next. Thankfully, expectant gamers who've spent the intervening period gnashing their teeth with anticipation of Dooms to come aren't likely to be disappointed. Aside from what looks like blowing away every single in-your-face 3D shoot-'em-up completely off the planet (Doom 64), the sick and twisted minds at Williams have brought us the final Doom 'til the big one... Prepare for over thirty levels of combat carnage as we head off into Hell just one more time...











After the familiar Williams logo has faded, and the Final Doom screen has thudded into view, you're greeted with the infamous 'skinboard' backdrop and the now-familiar options screen. One extra feature has been added; you can now whip your right hand into a frenzied blur using a mouse to control your marine's movement, but otherwise, it appears little different from the original version. And then come the level selections...

Four difficulty settings are available, and three separate missions are offered to tax and test your trigger finger to the maximum. First up are the Master Levels: thirteen hardcore adrenaline-soaked stages; then TNT: eleven blistering levels of gunning down the undead; and last Plutonium; six final missions

HAVE BEEN OVERRUN! ALIEN HORDES HAVE LANDED!







to test even the hardest of colonial marines, (with a big surprise at the end!). So, just before your crack combat operative decides to load his shotgun shells, gun down waves upon waves of hellspawn and hunt for that Big, er, Freakin' Gun, just what new features are there in here?

Well, unfortunately, only the level designs have changed; everything else has been seen before in the original incarnation, so those expecting a whole new look are likely to be disappointed. There are no new textures (except in the final few levels), there's the add glitch (courtesy of






PlayStation hardware problems) when monsters move over differently lit areas, the monsters behave in exactly the same manner, and there's still no Arch Vile! Why have you left out the finest Doom monster again?

However, since the guys at Williams has always stated that Final Doom would just be more of the same, we weren't expecting such additions. What you're left with is a superbly atmospheric



UAC BATTLE MANUAL

EXTRACT FROM HAMBLETON'S PERSONAL DATA FILE

CREATE CHAOS AMONG DEMONS BY MANEUVERING THEM INTO A CROSSFIRE. SIT BACK AND WATCH THE DEVILS TOAST THEMSELVES!



PREVIEW



SOMETHING EVIL IS APPROACHING...






DEVELOPER · WILLIAMS

PUBLISHER · WILLIAMS

FORMAT · CD

OF PLAYERS · 1-2 (LINK)

DIFFICULTY · MODERATE

AVAILABLE · NOVEMBER

romp through some of the most fiendish levels you've ever seen. The Master Levels are actually the hardest of the three, requiring thought and switch-pressing as well as a tooled-up marine and buckets of blood, while the other levels bring forth





CHIEF HAMBLETON
More gore than ever before! Chainsaw them varments to pieces!

UAC MONSTER MANUAL

EXTRACT FROM HAMBLETON'S PERSONAL DATA FILE

DOOM IS PACKED FULL OF THE MEANEST MOTHERS EVER TO WALK THE EARTH. GUNNER HAMBLETON IS PROUD TO REVEAL SATAN'S SERVANTS TO YOU...


FORMER SOLDIER


FORMER SERGEANT


IMP


CHAIN GUNNER


DEMON

MONSTERS! MONSTERS EVERYWHERE!

more monsters than you'd thought possible!

While I'm on the subject of monster counts; be sure to play this title on Ultra Violence, as any Doom professional is going to waltz through it on anything less. To be frank, I thought this addition didn't quite match the longevity of the original, as any competent player should have all the levels mastered in 24 hours.

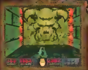













UAC BATTLE MANUAL

EXTRACT FROM HAMBLETON'S PERSONAL DATA FILE

FORMER SOLDIERS AND SERGEANTS CAN HIT YOU FROM ANY DISTANCE. MAKE THEM YOUR PRIMARY TARGET WHEN ENGAGING THE ENEMY.







However, you'll have more fun, frights and terrible carnage than you've ever had before! And yes, there are secret levels to find...

Mention must also be made of the music, as the Master Levels feature some all-new, er, soundscapes, lovingly crafted together by less sane members of the Williams development crew, and this time featuring all-new creaks, groans and even horses whinnying! This is by far the most atmospheric music ever heard in a video game, and a far cry from the soft-rock tragedies that plagued the 3DO version.

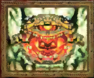
Of course, this wouldn't be Doom without DeathMatch; the joyous cre-


LOST SOUL


BARON OF HELL


KNIGHT OF HELL


CACODEMON


PAIN ELEMENTAL



ation that enables two individuals to gun each other down like pigs in the comfort of their own home. Or perhaps you'd rather complete the entire game with a friend, courtesy of Co-operative mode? Either way, it'll be too hard to resist grabbing a Rocket Launcher and gunning down your mate in the back, and then insisting he walked into your line-of-sight! These features extend the longevity of the title immeasurably, and there's even special DeathMatch-only levels to fight inside; complete with hidey-holes and blind-spots and replete with guns, guns and more guns. This is arguably the finest two-player game on the PlayStation, and reason enough to buy two copies!

As long as you remember that this is essentially thirty-plus levels of Doom, complete with cool lighting effects, awesome sound, but no new monsters (at least, not in the normal levels...), then you'll have almost as much of a blast as you did when you played Doom the first time on the PlayStation. Sure, there's not as many levels, but the multiplayer mode and fiendish level design more than makes up for that. This is the perfect stop-gap until Williams lace up their combat boots and stomp all over the genre with Doom 64... CH





ARACHNOTRON REVENANT MANCUBUS CYHERDEMON SPIDERDEMON

REVIEW

BLACK DAWN

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - BLACK OPS

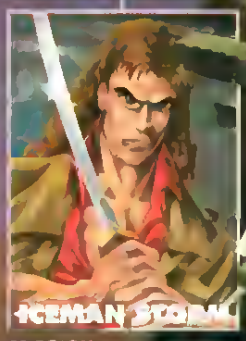
PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



MISSION ACCOMPLISHED...



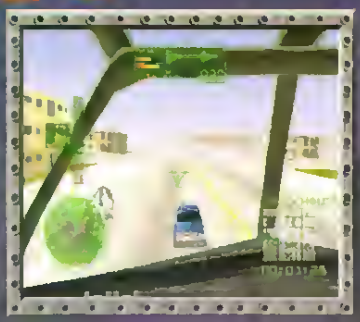
EXCITING 2 PLAYER VS MODE!!



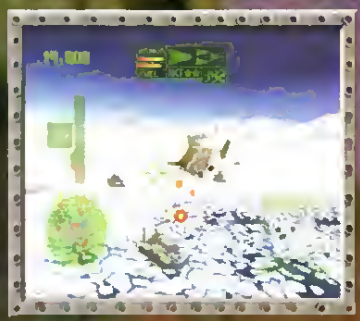












Is the PlayStation becoming the home for pilots or what? Here comes another mission, checkin' in for the end of '97. So far, the reigning champ, *Warhawk*, is in no immediate danger, but Virgin's *Black Dawn* will surely appease fans of that inspired work. *Black Dawn*, like so many other mission-based helicopter titles, offers the player a simulation-based shooter incorporating both ground and air targets, complex controls, realistic voice-overs during each mission, an in-depth story line, and in this case, a finely produced soundtrack. It's a Virgin game, and we've got *Skeleton Warriors* overtones. Sounds like the work of Tommy T! Anyway, these games live and die by the features I've just mentioned. Complex controls, for instance, can be either a curse or a blessing. In this case the latter is true. The same applies for each point in fact. In *Black Dawn*'s case, unlike a couple of other similar games I won't mention, everything is finely produced. This is the work of a team who took a great deal of care in formulating every aspect of their game. You can set the controls however you like and then, taking control, you're offered four camera views and a chopper that may as well be real. Hot lighting follows its every move as you take to the skies; there's a button for literally everything. One thing I've noticed in every chopper game I've played is that each developer has their own way of masking pop-up. Of course some just let you watch it seep into place. In *Black Dawn*, Black Ops has chosen the growing-in-popularity fog mask, a white haze that clears as you progress. They've added transparent mist which flows from it as well, making it an attractive alternative to painful clipping. The polygons in Black Dawn however, including all types of military craft, trees (they're solid, don't underestimate 'em), shelters etc. are the stars of this show. They are finely textured and animated beyond the point of realism. They almost look dramatic as they descend, turning, to the ground below. The explosions by the way are fiery balls of realistic flames, and the burning heaps of metal you've blown out of the sky produce lighting effects flickering realistically against the charred soil as they burn down, frying the enemies inside. You're one cold-hearted dude. You have to be to survive.

Black Dawn throws a lot at you and demands you learn its controls before even thinking victory. But with all the complaints we had about simplistic controls and shortness in reference to these games on 16-bit, this should be a welcome feature. If you're in the market for some hot chopper action, why watch it on CNN? Head down to your local game store and try a few your bad self. Virgin's *Black Dawn* is available now. *ES*

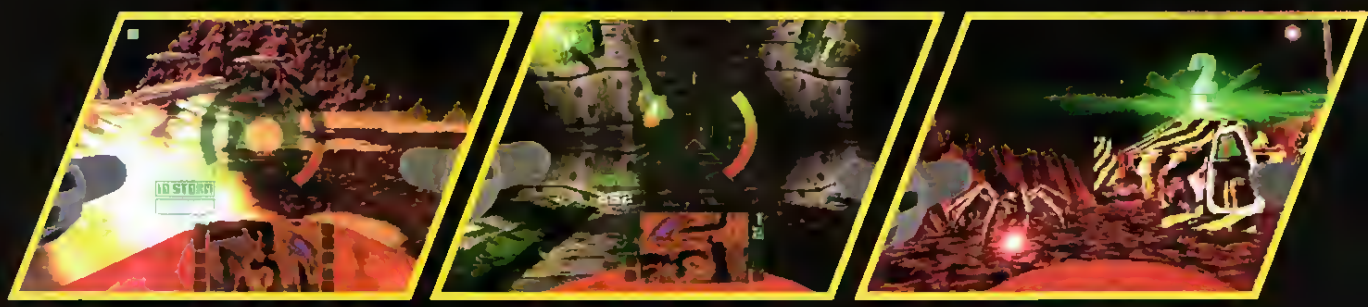








MACHINE HEAD



COMING SOON PlayStation Saturn

CORE Design Ltd.

EIDOS

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GRID RUNNER

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - VIRGIN

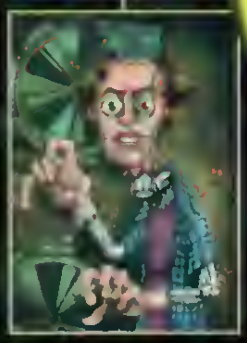
PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

FORMAT - CD

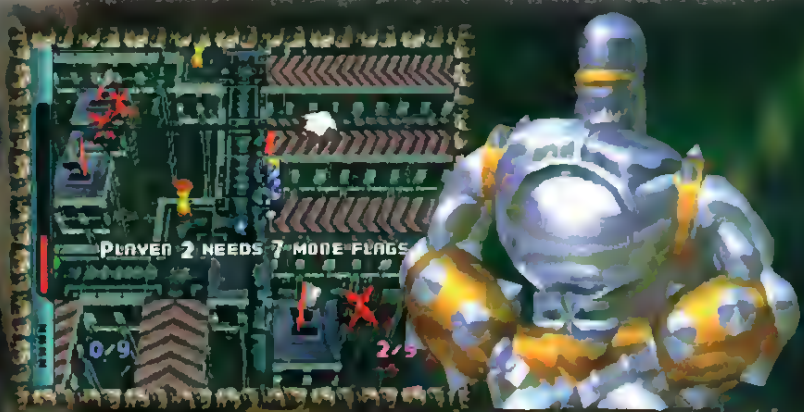
OF PLAYERS - 1-2(LINK)

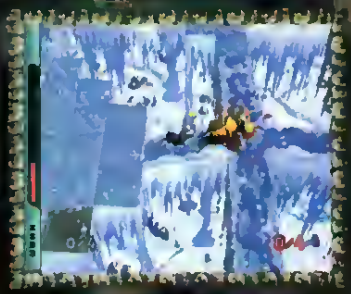
DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

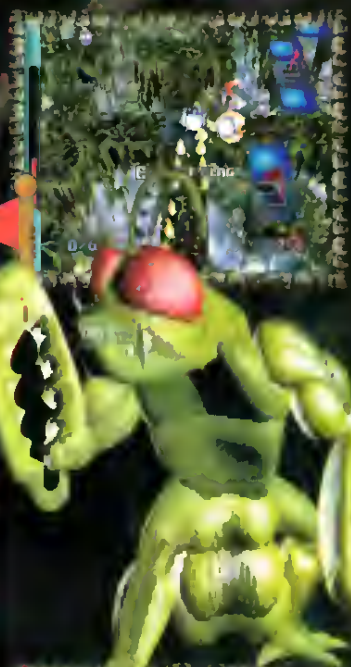
AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



GLITCH
Play it... Have fun!









If you've been through my review of the Saturn version of *Grid Runner*, you'll know I'm a big fan of this game. What it lacks in graphical sheen is more than compensated for by the mass of gameplay fun at your disposal. This is a game of simple objectives that takes me back to the old days of gaming, when your adrenaline was raised by the intensity of the game, not the amount of texture-mapped polygons being displayed. While *Grid Runner* in no way sacrifices its graphics for hot gameplay, I find myself returning for another game because of the play, not the jazz.

Grid Runner is an overhead action shooter set in distant space. While searching through an abandoned colony, you stumble upon a strange room with a dazzling prism-like artifact in its center. Suddenly the door seals behind you and you are trapped. Moments later, you are seized by a psychotic woman who forces you to enter the Grid and battle her champions. These battles occur on elevated grids, set-up like mini-mazes, where you face a single powerful opponent. Your goal? Collect a set number of flags per level and you win. Your weapons? A trusty gun-gun to blow your opponent, and the ability to create grids out of thin air to reach other areas of the zone (as well as speed, teleporting, and 'slow enemy' spells). Of course, your opponent has these same goals and weapons at its disposal, and will fight 'til the last flag is snared. Picking up the play mechanics happens instantaneously, and once you realize the hyper-kinetic simplicity of it all, the fun begins.

If you own a PS and a Saturn, I'll say right away that the Saturn version is superior. Picture a side-by-side analysis of the hardware, the advantages that are common to each system, and *Grid Runner* fulfills them to the fullest. For instance, the Saturn handles this type of game (overhead scrolling) with ease, and one can see that the pseudo-3D scrolling is on deeper and/or higher terrain (while the PS version is fairly flat). The bit-map backgrounds are identical on each system, but the Saturn's built of background scrolling capabilities enables parallax and full rotation to compliment the BGs. The rendered characters are also larger on the Saturn, but are smoother and crystal clear on the PS. This translates into the CG intro also, and pre-match enemy intros, which are much clearer on the PS. The pre-match intros actually have an extra second or two of extra character animation on the Saturn.

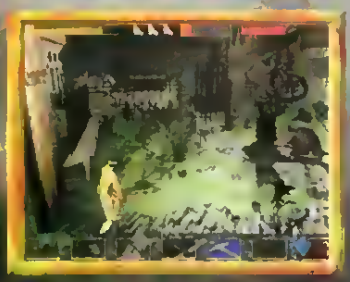
An advantage the PS game has over the Saturn version lies in its link-up feature which adds weeks of life to an already very replayable title. I'm only pointing out the facts, though, which are moot when compared to the offerings the actual game contains.

Grid Runner is a hot little title and one of my favorite 'tweener games (fun games to play between RPGs and lengthy action games) along with *Bomberman SS* and *Pitball*. It's terribly easy to get involved in the whole Grid Running concept, and staying hooked, usually to wreak your revenge after a close defeat, is great fun that shouldn't be missed.. *G*



Time Commando

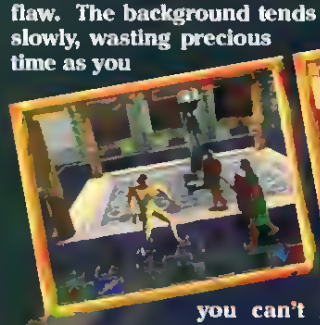


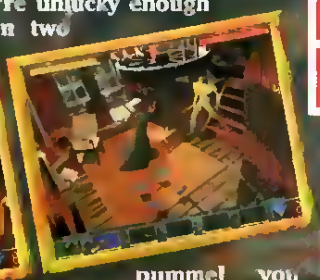
A government computer, which was created to simulate time travel for combat training, has been infected with a virus bent on destroying it. Your mission is to enter it and eliminate any traces of the virus in a variety of time periods. The premise sounds cool, but unfortunately, this ride through time isn't a smooth one.

From screenshots alone, a comparison could be made between *Time Commando* and *Resident Evil*, which is a bit of irony. *Commando*'s creator also made *Alone in the Dark*, which can be argued is the inspiration for Capcom's masterpiece. However, the background in *Commando* is FMV: As you progress through a stage, the world moves along with you. This is rather an interesting feature, as it prevents angle adjustments from room to room. Yet, this is *Commando*'s minor flaw. The background tends to scroll slowly, wasting precious time as you wait for it to progress. Also, you can't go back once you've moved ahead, so if you walk ahead too far and miss an item, it's gone.






Its major flaw is, unfortunately, the game engine. Control is slow, from movement to jump response time. It's something that you can get used to, but the problem really comes into play when encountering enemies. If you're unlucky enough to get caught between two baddies, they can pummel you like mad, and it's insanely difficult to get out of it. This is a problem overcome by careful planning in early stages, but once weapons progress into firearms, it can get ugly. Reloading takes far too long, and if you're hit in the middle of it, you have to start all over again. The thing is, *Time Commando* could have been enjoyable if the engine wasn't so frustrating. The quest is long, with nine different time periods to traipse around, and each has its own style of weaponry to obtain and utilize, which is a very cool plus.



My guess is, gamers who prefer PC-style games may like *Time Commando* more than console gamers, as it feels more like a traditional computer game. If *Resident Evil* wasn't out there, this would be more of an event on the PlayStation. But, it is, making *Time Commando* harder to fall in love with, knowing what it could have been with a few minor adjustments.

S

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER · ADELINE

PUBLISHER · ACTIVISION

FORMAT · CD

OF PLAYERS · 1

DIFFICULTY · ADVANCED

AVAILABLE · SEPTEMBER

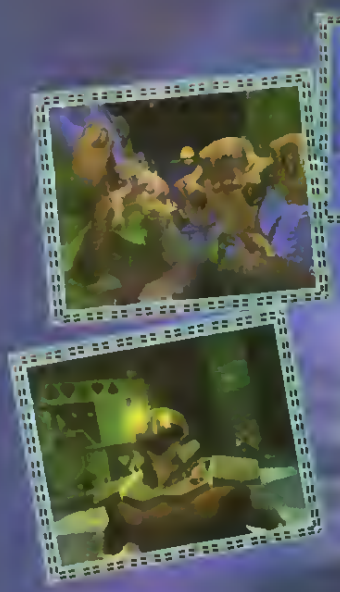
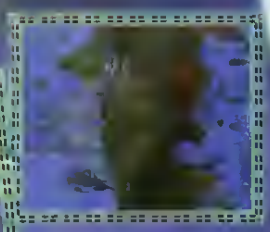
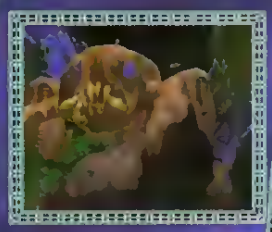


SHIDOSHI

"HEY, WASN'T THAT JUST TIMEGAL?"








THE DIVIDE
ENEMIES WITHIN

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - VIACOM

PUBLISHER - VIACOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - 4TH QTR '96

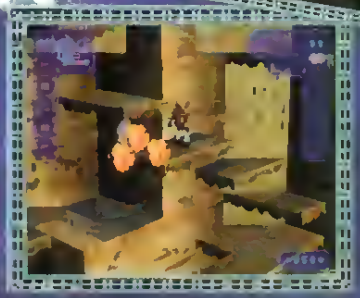


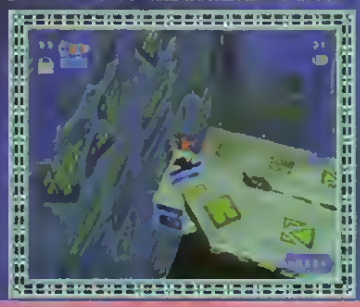
E. STORM
NOT JUST ANOTHER BUG HUNT...

People often wonder if mankind will eventually be the rein of the Earth. (Of course they will! Polluting and exhausting its resources has become a spectator sport. *Run down those trees Jed. Hey, I just caught me a lizard... er-her, er-her) – ehem (sorry)* – forcing us to journey among the stars to find new planets on which to continue the human race... *and Saturday Night Slam!* Yeah right, that could happen. Space travel's right around the corner! Unfortunately, as *The Divide* begins, such is the situation, and you are but one of many given the task of locating such places. One day, while flying along on your mission, you and your partner discover a quiet, icy planet slowly coming into view. After running a series of tests and checks, it seems to be inhabitable, so you set out to see for yourself if the iceberg can sustain human life. Your partner warns you of the dangers of setting foot on an alien planet, but despite her reservations, you manage to talk her into accompanying you to the surface.

The landing craft sets down at the bottom of a huge rift, the only really distinguishable feature on the surface of the planet. To protect against unknown elements, you both suit up in robotic exploration units, and exit the craft to explore the surroundings. However, unbeknownst to you, something very wrong is going on upon this planet, something started by the hand of another, an outside influence greatly changing the balance of harmony that once existed. From seemingly out of nowhere, a large group of insect-like beasts attack you, quickly overpowering your partner and disabling your life support systems. Those creatures, which normally would be nothing more than low-intelligence life forms, (*see Saturday Night Slam*) have some-

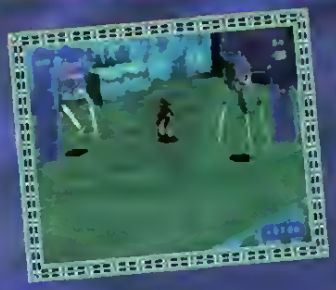




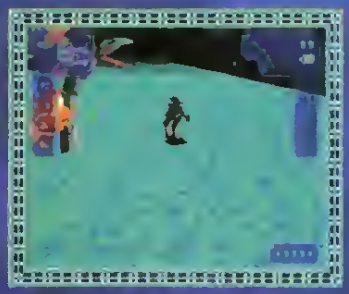



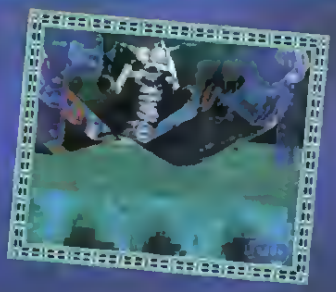






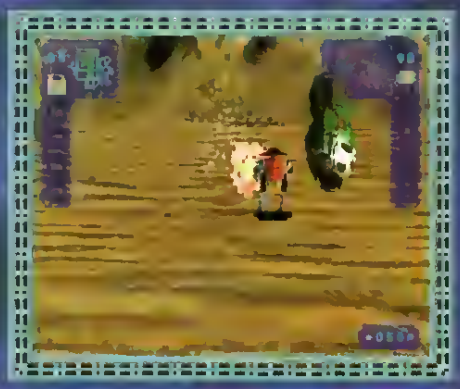




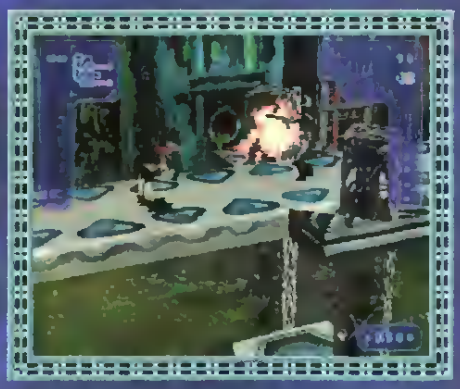


how been fased with high-powered weaponry, and tho confasion of what has jast taken place rings through yoar hoad as you tall into a state of cryo-sleep.

The gamo bogins as yoar exploration "suif" thaws oat from its frozen state, and yoa awaken, not knowing at tirst how long you've beon slambering. Yoa decide tho only thing yoa can really do is try to figare







oat where you ero, what's going on, and if yoar partner is still alive, oat thoro... somewhere. And so off yoa go, to explore tho vast expanso of the 3D world which beckons to yoar call. Then yoa realize yoa're in yoar living room and these ere just polygons... *Dinner...*

From the opening cinema, *Divide* has a very epic feel to it, helping to raise it above the level of the just anothor 'explore a 3D world' title. And while tho stories are very different, deep in the back of my mind I coaldn't help comparing *Divide* to *Metroid*; they both hold a similar feeling and atmosphere and require the player to return to places he's already been (of coarse, that doesn't mean that *Divide* doesn't have tho legs to stand on it's own; they just share a similar style).

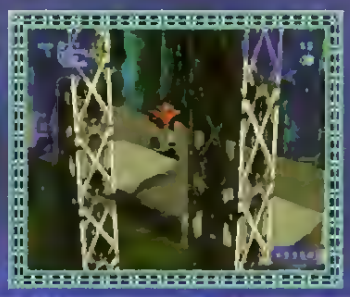
The Divide indeed, has the potential to become a sleeper hit. After being sacked in by all the mega-licenses, yoa could, or rather should, end up here, pleasantly sarprised by the depth of it all.

Tho graphics fit right in with the outer space atmosphere and honestly look a whole lot better in motion. The game engine holds a lot of promise, and the control feels very solid (quite literally, yoa *are* in a metal sait). The beginning of the demo provides you with ample opportanity to become accastomed to the plattorming challenges ahead. It's rathor easy to pick up but, like *Metroid*, hard to master.

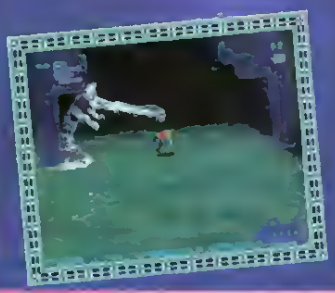
One can always find a few things that could use a bit of tweaking, and there are a coaple of minor points I feel needed more attention. The auto-map for instance, isn't as useful as I'd like and changing areas switches your camera back to the preset, requiring you to toggle it for each. No big deal really, a minor boggle. Thankfully, a picture is worth a thousand words which, as you can see, I don't have enough room for. What you see is what you get.

Vast, platform covered adventures are always welcome in my book, especially ones as uncommon and diverse as this. This is how series are born... and one may have just been spanked.
















REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - RADICAL

PUBLISHER - VIACOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



GLITCH
LET'S CYBER-MOSH 'TIL WE PUKE GINSENG BURGERS!

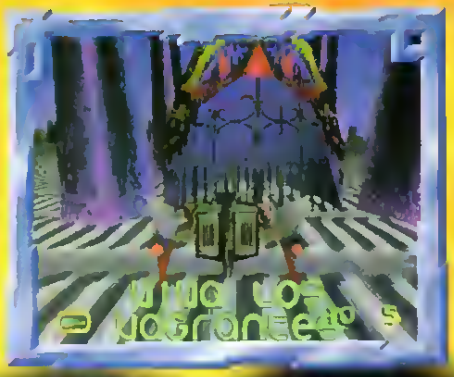
Uh-oh! An MTV video game! Let me dispel your tears immediately: *It's not full motion video*. Feeling a little better now? In tact, the only MTV connection is a mode away trom the main game that lets you watch a tew videos (by God Lives Underwater). There's no V.J. geek interrupting with Gen-X "I'm hip" straight outta *Friends* commentary. No, *Slamscape* is about as opposite to expectations as you could imagine. A tirst person, 3D, texture-mapped polygon shooter with the MTV label? Yep...

Slamscape's bizarre storyline goes like this: You've just been in a rib-spliffing, skull-crushing, spleen-busting car accident that left you halt-comatose. As your bloody gore-pile ot a body is screeching through the hospital doors, a group ot mad hackers just, kinda, *steal you*, and you're volunteered to become a cyber guinea pig. That's right! You're a mess, but through the miracle ot airbags, you're the perfect candidate tor an experimental thought-powered virtual simulator, code-named *Slamscape*. It seems that previous bug testers, all 16 ot 'em, were sucked in by the *Slamscape* engine and got 'whipped on high tor 3 minutes, or until tluffy' leaving their psyches melded together. Uh-huh, you guessed it, you've been slapped with today's lucky badge and they're sending you in, to tind the cranial Jell-O-pops and hopetully bring them back trom the mindscape cyber-trap.

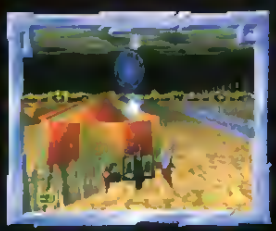


Radical has *Slamscape* running at 60 trames per second, although you really can't see very tar into the horizon betore convenient-mist takes over. I suppose everyone's gonna see the *SlamScape* ads soon – touting their "tull, real-time interactive soundtrack." Well, besides being a catchy buzz-word name, this technology is actually pretty cool. Alternative band *God Lives Underwater* did the music, with PCM tunes that change on the tly, (depending on the on-screen intensity) and it always manages to stay in rhythm. The game itselt is tairly short, with very little diversity between the missions (you collect stutt here, destroy stuff there), and un-clear objectives. It's never bad; just so *weird*. The enemies, your goals, the crazy music, the bizarre levels – everything is strange to the point ot leaving one baffled and contused. Eventually I got a grip on the concept, but I can't say I liked the overall execution. I understand MTV/Viacom probably wanted 3D graphics, something *virtual* set in *cyberspace*, and new and unexplored concepts with revolutionary music technology. The trouble is, *Slamscape* scrapes the surface of each one ot these, but never does any one aspect well enough to carry the game.

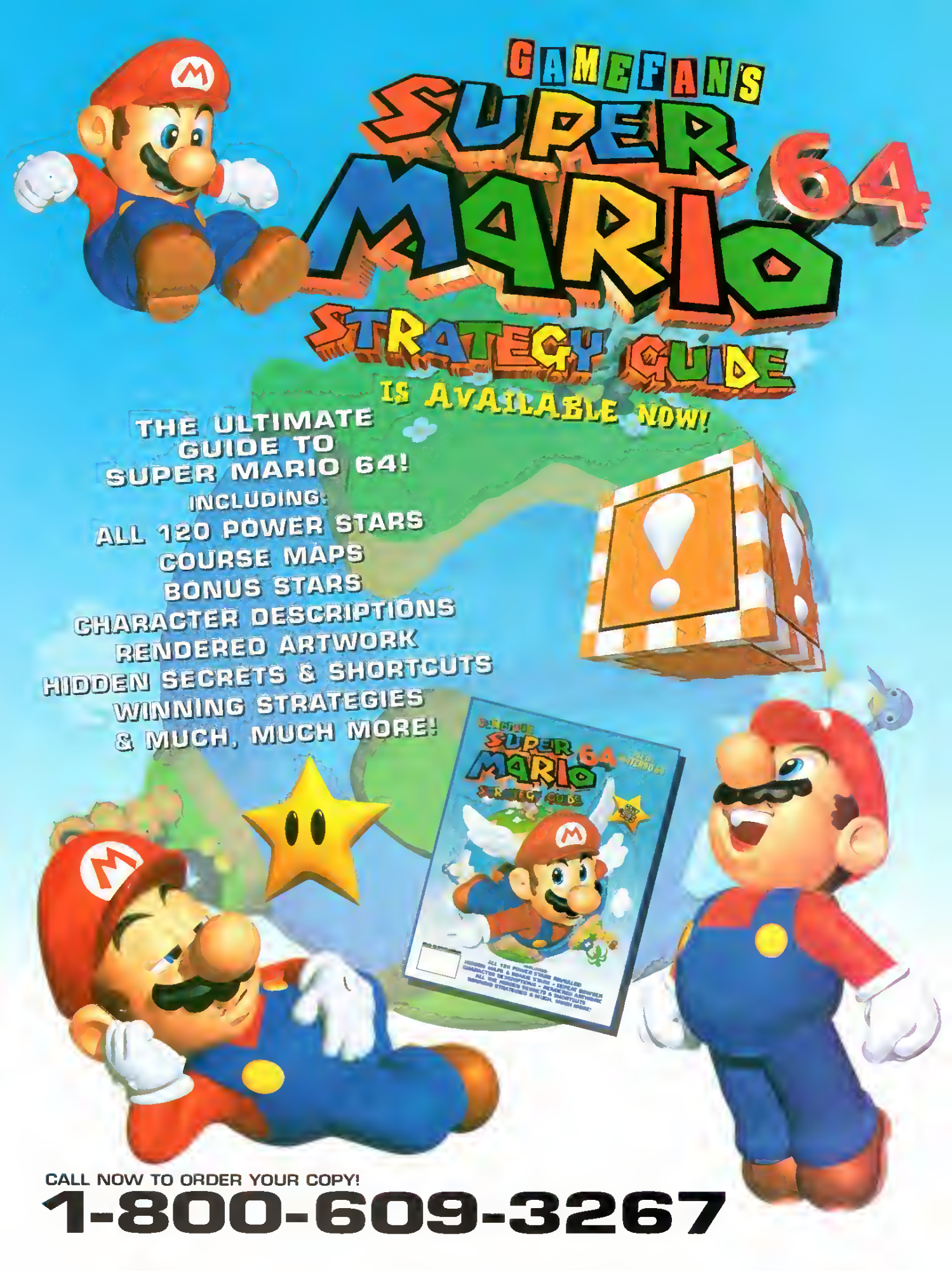
-G






slamscape


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REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - JVC

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - EASY

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



CHIEF HAMBLETON
Not much impact here, try some Wipeout XL.

IMPACT RACING

The Irish arm of Funcom (hailing from Dublin) are responsible for this hyper-racing title, due for both Saturn and PlayStation, and both feature speedy action in the same vein as *Wipeout* and *Hi-Octane*. This is extreme racing madness as your souped-up cyber motor attempts to blow as many enemies as possible into the stratosphere. At the same time, you must claw your way up the racing ladder, collecting power-ups and equipping your vehicle with an increasing array of deadly killing ordinance. Sounds cool, doesn't it? But is it any good?



First impressions are good, as a fluid and professional CG sequence pans around a revving roadster (with particularly excellent lighting effects as the sun streams in from an air-vent). Then the vehicle powers into life and the legend 'Impact Racing' appears! Next stop... the combat zone! And this is where things start to go slightly awry...




The game is very similar to *Wipeout*, except you blast your enemy to bits with machine guns and collect power-ups from the smoking remains. The game is action-packed, fast moving and full of cool polygon (and adequate lighting) effects, but blighted with a number of problems that prevent it from becoming elevated to *Wipeout* status. Firstly, you've got a limited time (as usual), and the cars are constantly in your face, but there's no real feeling of being in the lead, as despite zooming about at maximum velocity, cars still pass you. Secondly (and this is a major gripe), the roadways themselves are far too narrow; to such an extent that there's little room for maneuvering tactics.






So, in short, they've taken a cool idea and presented the gamer with an adequate version of the racing genre with more flaws than entertainment. Racing fanatics might just find themselves lovin' it, but the rest of us should definitely 'steer clear' (ahem) of this one; this is nowhere near the quality of *Wipeout XL*. ***CH***

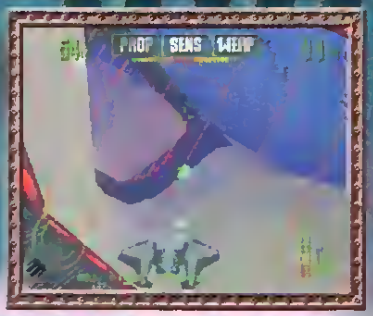












TIGERSHARK

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - GT INTERACTIVE

PUBLISHER - GT INTERACTIVE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER

It's shortly after the year 2060, and mankind is about to learn from its obsession with technology. In the future, our oceans are being used for everything – additional land, food cultivation, raw materials, and as a source of power. The Japanese, in a bold move, create 'Geothermal Taps,' which are constructed in the fault lines running close to Japan. These taps are built not only to harness power, but also to help stabilize the faults.

However, things soon go wrong. The fragile earth on which Japan rests gives way under a large series of earthquakes, and a majority of the Japanese islands are lost to a watery grave. Russian forces quickly move in, taking over all that remains of them. However, the collapse of Japan was no accident: it was planned, single-handedly, by a crazed Russian commander named Admiral Dmitri Konstantin. He built his own series of Taps, connected them to the Japanese ones, and did experiments on using the energy produced for means of destruction.

So opens GT Interactive's newest PlayStation title. Your job is to pilot the experimental vehicle, the *Tigershark*, and not only take out the Russian Taps, but Admiral Konstantin himself. Your craft is capable of both above and below water operation, and as you play you'll have to deal with enemy crafts in both regions. Whereas most games of this type tend to have a slower, more technical style of gameplay, *Tigershark* is closer to that of a fast-paced arcade game. The option to play either surfaced or submerged is a nice one: it makes for a package with quite a bit of possibility. *Tigershark* is only 65% done at this point, and rough in some areas, so we'll let you know more once it's progressed further. S

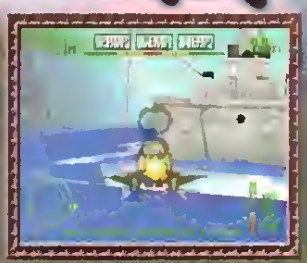








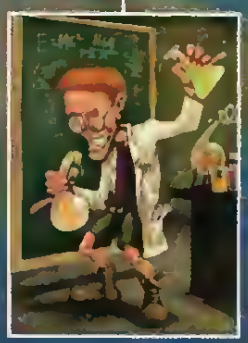




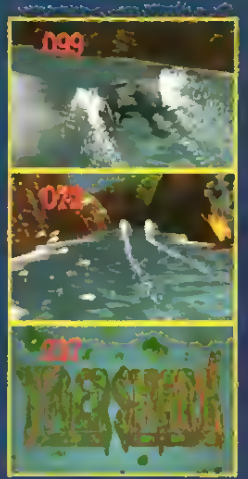








SHIDOSHI











REVIEW

Floating Runner

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - XING

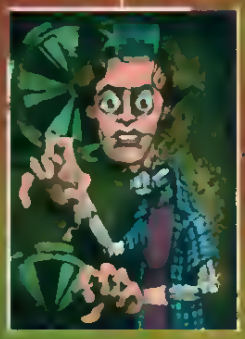
PUBLISHER - T•HQ

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - EASY

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



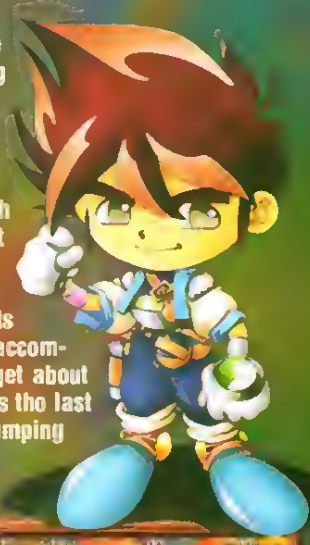
GLITCH



Released by Xing and Kokopeli a few months ago in Japan, *Floating Runner* has already been picked up by T•HQ for an American release. While it didn't exactly blow through charts or set record sales, it's encouraging to see small American companies porting over titles that would normally never see these shores. *Floating Runner* is a 100% free-roaming 3D platformer, employing classic run 'n' jump principles across 7 unique (and extremely colorful!) landscapes.

As far as gameplay goes, *Floating Runner* scores big for its freedom of movement and diverse level design. Across forest, sky, fire, desert, water, crystal, badlands, and the darklands, every stage offers new sights and refreshing platforming challenges. The fire world, for example, includes some pretty harrowing platform sections. Timed jumps and perfect judgment is required, or a lava bath might become your undue reward. Putting your platforming skills to use in a 3D environment, no matter how bland the flat polys may be at times, is still a novelty which takes much time to wear thin. Don't for a moment think that *Floating Runner* is the *Mario 64* of PS 3D platformers; gimme a break, it's not even on the same planet. This is, ultimately, a very short game (despite its total of 14 levels), that never gives one the sense of accomplishment needed in a platformer. For example, forget about bonus levels – they ain't here. Bosses? One, and he's the last guy in the game. And beyond the fun platform jumping aspect of *FR*, you can forget about any real challenge...say it with me: *unlimited continues.*

















All artwork © 1996 T•HQ



The kind that drops you right back in the spot that you died, anytime, every time. The only real killer in *Floating Runner* is time, but after a few plays you should be able to blow through levels in a few minutes – reducing that "killer" to a passing thought.

Flat-shaded polygons make up most of *FR*'s graphics, with tiny snippets of texture-mapping here and there. Besides the obvious quantity of polygons, thanks to the PS, the flat polys make *FR* look like a really good 32X (Nooooo!) game. While that statement isn't exactly flattering, *Runner* has its graphical moments with ultra-bright colors throughout and some nice color cycling effects. The scrolling is smooth (considering the PS can render a million-plus flat shaded polys at once!), but there's still, for some reason, a noticeable amount of pop-up. Even more disturbing is that the game's two perspectives, overhead and tilted overhead (gee, thanks for the HUGE variety), show such a limited amount of playfield there shouldn't be a hint of pop-up whatsoever. The music is pretty good, with lots of happy run and jump tunes. Just ask Shidoshi if he liked the mega-cute music in the crystal level and you'll hear a resounding "Yes!"

In the end, I feel free to recommend *Floating Runner* to PS owners as long as they don't take it too seriously. I had fun, sure, but after playing it the umpteenth time, and knowing that no matter how severely I screwed up, I could continue once again, I was left saying, "Why?" Why should I play a game I know like the back o' my hand, which holds little challenge, and ends way too fast? I'm at liberty to play *Floating Runner* anytime, but you spend your hard earned cash on games and I respect that fact. My apologies for this hyper-cliché, but make sure you try before you buy. *G*

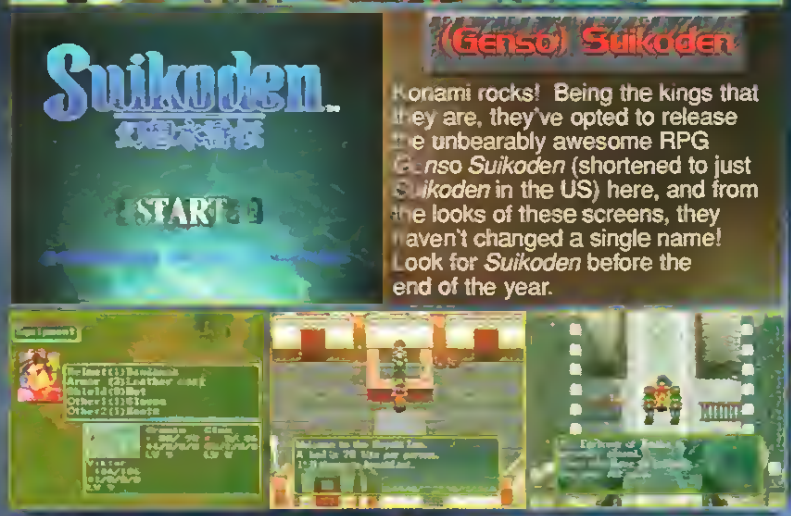






(Genso) Suikoden

Konami rocks! Being the kings that they are, they've opted to release the unbearably awesome RPG *Genso Suikoden* (shortened to just *Suikoden* in the US) here, and from the looks of these screens, they haven't changed a single name! Look for *Suikoden* before the end of the year.



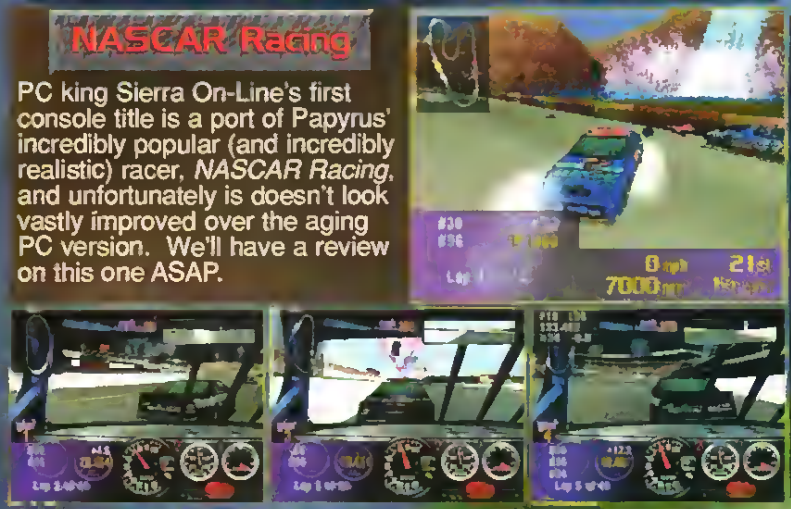
Namco Museum Vol.2

The nostalgia-laden Namco Musem series continues Stateside with a package containing the first real shooter, *Xevious*, everyone's favorite police-mouse *Mappy*, *Super Pac-Man* and the little-seen *Grobda*, *Gaplus* and *Dragon Buster*. Anyone born after 1975, however, will have to wait for volumes 4 and 5 before anything exciting comes along...



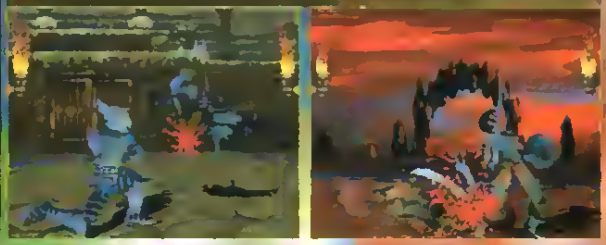
NASCAR Racing

PC king Sierra On-Line's first console title is a port of Papyrus' incredibly popular (and incredibly realistic) racer, *NASCAR Racing*, and unfortunately is doesn't look vastly improved over the aging PC version. We'll have a review on this one ASAP.



Iron & Blood

Dear Lord... can it be? Yes... another look at Acclaim's *Iron & Blood* in GameFan! Look for a review on this highly original AD&D fighter developed by Take 2 Interactive, the makers of Hell, in the next issue of GameFan. As it stands, we have only one thing to say: Matchovjuftick. magic power!





Tecmo's Deception

One of the most original video games to come along in quite some time, *Tecmo's Deception* is a game in which *you* are the one laying traps and trying to kill the "good guys" who enter your castle. We apologize for not giving this one more attention, and we're going to try and give it a full-fledged review next issue. If it's out as you're reading this, seriously consider its purchase. This game is *very* cool.







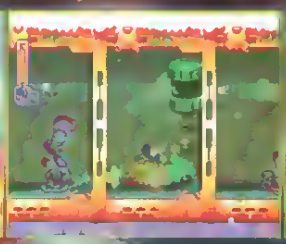
MegaMan 8

Yeah, we know we just brought you half a page on *MegaMan 8* last month but we just received a new version and it's unbelievable. The first rev, the one you saw last month, was very cool but was your basic *MegaMan* fare. The new one far eclipses what we thought the game would be... Crazed parallax, so many sprites on screen it just *hurts* and a blazing collection of new weapons. This one comes out in December, so we'll have more very soon!













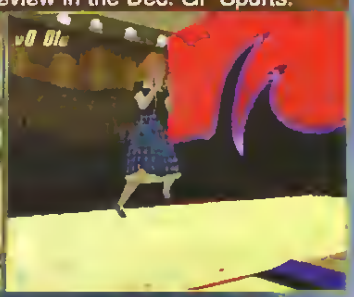
Ten Pin Alley

And now for something completely different... And why not? Remember *League Bowling* on the NEO-GEO? It actually garnered quite a following. ASC's *Ten Pin Alley* smokes it by adding comedic overtones, mega animation and 100% polygonal playfields. You'll find a review in the Dec. GF Sports.











Perfect Weapon

ASC games *Perfect Weapon* takes place across five hostile worlds featuring over 1300 pre rendered environments. The movement and cameras alike look up to the task. We'll review *PW* in December.

Test Drive Offroad

Hummer, Jeep, Land Rover and Chevrolet-licensed *Test Drive Offroad* by Activision, has the potential to lead the off road genre. The vehicles look, sound and handle like the real thing and the courses are looking very promising.















Broken Helix

It's *Doom* with a plotline... and a good one at that! Though only 25% done, Konami America's second game is looking *awesome*. There's as much thinking and puzzle-solving here as action, and it's about time - corridor games were beginning to get... hell, they've been old for nearly two years. Look for more *BH* soon!









NINTENDO THEATER 64

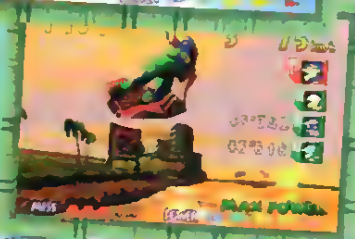
NINTENDO'S LATEST TAKES YOU OUT ON THE WATER!

AN ALL-NEW INCREDIBLY REALISTIC RACING EXPERIENCE!!

WAVERACE 64

Of all the in-house Nintendo 64 games, *WaveRace* initially stood out as the least spectacular during the long development period when the idea of *F-Zero* on water was changed to a jet-skiing extravaganza. Perhaps the gaming community was more interested in the exploits of a Brooklyn plumber than in a game which underwent a serious redesign (Nintendo saving those initial sled designs for *F-Zero 64*). Of course, after the completion of *Super Mario 64* and *Pilotwings 64*, all those owning imported Nintendo











POWER UP YOUR JET-SKI!

THIS GAME IS HOT!

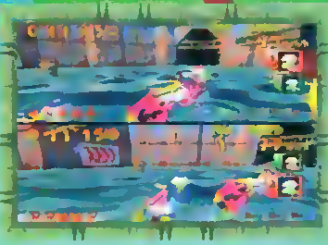




CHOOSE FROM FOUR GAME MODES FOR ONE OR TWO PLAYERS!

TRY CHAMPIONSHIP, TIME, SLALOM OR STUNT MODES!







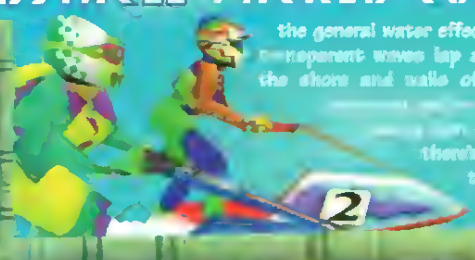


 WaveRace logo © Nintendo 1996.

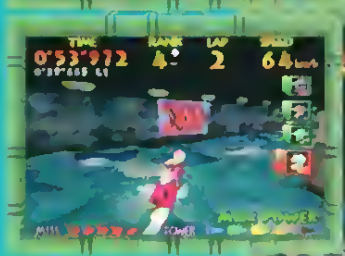


RACE NINE OBSTACLE-PACKED COURSES!





the general water effects; the undulating transparent waves lap and crash against the shore and walls of the circuit with [illegible]. These are actual [illegible] are crashing [illegible] there's no glitching, no pop-up [illegible] to indicate this water's made up of thousands of polygons blended seamlessly together. But the real shock comes when your jet-skier decides to take his (or [illegible]) motor out for a spin; your [illegible] bobs up and down on the water perfectly, with each wave affecting the jet-ski differently while a wake of frothing white water is left as you weave and dart about the ocean. You'll spend at least half an hour simply trying to fathom how such a spectacular effect is being displayed right there in front of you (contained on a cart no bigger than a cassette tape). But you'd better snap out of your blissful joy there's some serious competition ahead!





The various modes cater to every type of gamer; the Practice and Single race modes teach newcomers the basics of the game, the Time Trial enables those already well versed with jet-ski surfing the chance to better their times and the Stunt option allows those without any care for their safety the chance to show off





NINTENDO HAS DONE IT AGAIN!









R REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - NINTENDO

PUBLISHER - NINTENDO

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 1 or 2

DIFFICULTY - CHALLENGING

AVAILABLE - NOVEMRER



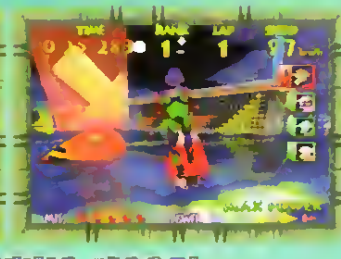
CHIEF HAMBLETON

SINCE I NEVER WASH I'VE NEVER BEEN ONE FOR WATER, BUT THAT'S ALL CHANGED NOW!!

64s began frantically looking for their next 64-bit fix, and *WaveRace* became the third most eagerly awaited Nintendo 64 game. Excitement reached fever pitch as successive versions of the game became more and more striking, and once we heard that the Great Game God Miyamoto was overseeing the project and had blessed it with his greatness, we were salivating with anticipation.

And now the nearest you can get to jet-skiing without struggling into a rubber suit has arrived. We plugged in the cart and were treated to another demonstration of awesome 64-bit power. The first graphical feature you notice has to be

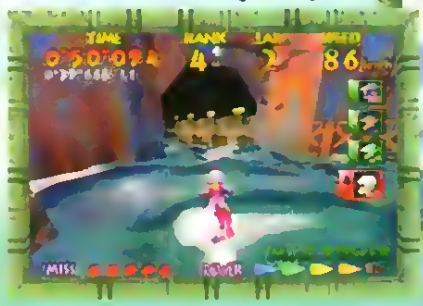


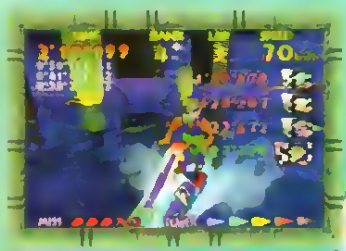
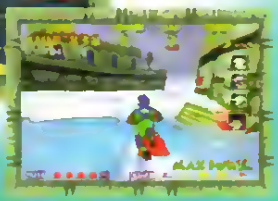
RACE AGAINST THE COMPUTER AND THE CLOCK IN CHAMPIONSHIP MODE!

their advanced maneuvers. However, it is the Championship mode that's by far the most grueling and fun; take to the water with three other competitors and become the new Wave Race champion!

The premise is delightfully simple (and one that should be instantly familiar to anyone with Super Mario Kart in their Super NES collection); you've got to progress through seven different courses at maximum velocity, weaving between yellow and red buoys to avoid losing this speed. Of course, you've got three other contestants out to prove their worth and a load of obstacles to avoid (such as mines (!), floating debris and other flotsam and jetsam). Finish first and you'll receive seven points, second gets four, third has two and fourth gets only one;


and then you're off to the next course, but this time there's a minimum points average to beat before you can progress further. Beat the game and you'll get another track,



differently placed obstacles and tougher opponents. Complete it again on this harder setting and another course appears with the action heating up considerably before the real fun begins...

The screenshots speak volumes for themselves (more than words ever could), leaving me to explain the features of the courses on offer. The initial circuit is Sandy Beach; a regular oval track in a crystal blue ocean with beach huts, a calm ocean and flapping seagulls. Next is Sunset Bay... oh the sunset, oh the lens flare of the sun, oh the translucent orange water effects... this is simply too breathtaking to take in; the dolphins playfully scooting about your ski (and being sil-

CHOOSE FROM FOUR PLAYERS!

Three gentlemen and one lady are available for this racing season, and as you'd imagine, they're blessed with differing attributes and disabilities. The delightful Micaela turns like greased lightning, but comes up short when asked to barge into any other competitor, while the reverse is true of the stout Razman, who corners like a dead haddock but can introduce any of his rivals to an extreme view of the surf with a swift shunt to the side at close quarters. Of the other two, Bubba-Gump is a good all-rounder and Tsunami is a speed freak. Take your pick, tweak the performance of your jet-ski and challenge all in a race for the Wave cup!

FOUR COMPETITORS LINE UP FOR THE RACE OF A LIFETIME!

CUSTOMIZE YOUR JET-SKI! ADJUST HANDLING, ENGINE AND








TWO-PLAYER MODE IS WHERE IT'S AT!



SPLIT SCREEN TWO-PLAYER ACTION!

Thia wouldn't be a Miyamoto-influenced racar without a good old-fashioned split screan two-player moda, and thankfully *Wave Race* doesn't disappoint! Except for those living in a cave for the paat five years, everyone has played *Super Mario Kart*, and for two player thrills, this more than matches that claaaic, but now your aggreaaion takaa placa on the water! The action is at a constant 30fps (juat like tha one player) and graphically, there's little difference betwean the two modes (except for the half-screen play area). You can really have fun with thia ona; leaping over wooden gallaons and weaving between jetty poles, but thia time you've got another playar sittin' next to you breathing down your neck and juat waiting to elda-shunt you into a jetty! Two player mode is almost too much fun, and reason enough to buy the game...



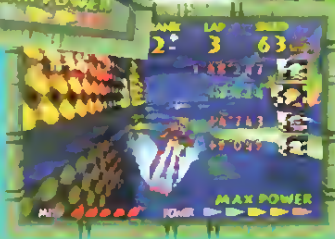
are just one of the extras you won't believe you're seeing. There's the Milky Lake; an initial layer of fog gives way to clear, calm lake water (Perfect reflections! I've never seen anything like it!) — flocks of geese flapping about, bulrushes zip through and fish swimming as you race.

Other courses include the Marine Fortress (yep, I'll jet-ski through an inland canal and avoid crates and huge choppy waves!) and Port Pirates (swerve through watery tunnels and negotiate my way around an oil tanker!), but the main fun comes from the secret courses; Cool Wave, where ice, snow and sliding all combine, Castle City, a narrow set of jumps, bumps and diving during the night with some fantastic light show effects and Southern Island (with secrets I won't spoil for you...).

The Miyamoto influence is all too evident; the learning curve is perfection, the game is absolutely the best

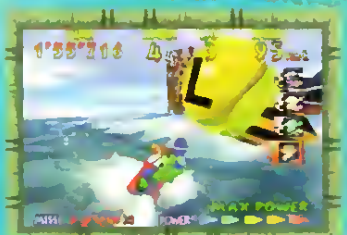












fun you can have (Miyamoto makes all his games the most enjoyable around) and the little extras (like the competitors shaking their heads when they lose, backflipping off the jet-ski and surfacing again, or the ability to skim across the sand for that vitally important short-cut) all add to the overall awe of the game. This isn't just a leap forward from the driving games of today's next generation; this is a whole new world, and I'm already diving right in! You should definitely join me... **CH**

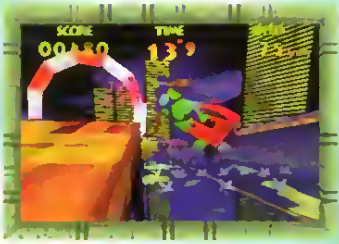
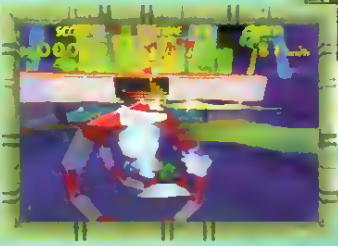
TRY STUNT MODE AND PERFECT YOUR TECHNIQUE!







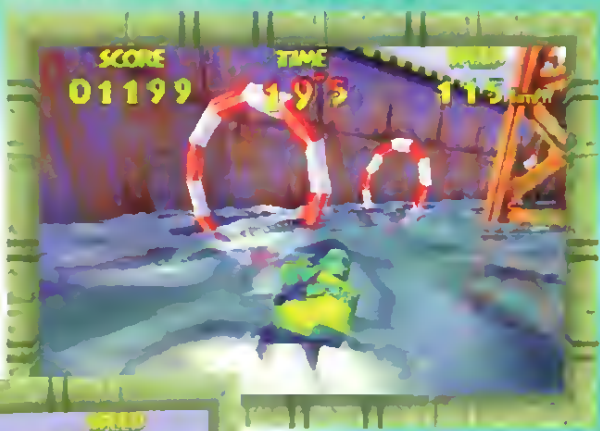

STUNT MODE ROCKS! ONLY THE HARDEST OF THE HARD NEED APPLY!


FLY THROUGH THE AIR AND THE WATER TO GET THROUGH THOSE HOOPS!!



One of the many disciplines included in this astounding title are Stunt versions of the courses you have completed. The object is to gain over 6000 points in one lap of your preferred course, and for those uninitiated in the ways of the wave, I'd recommend you try the one player mode until you're accuatomed to the control (it'll take you at least a day to get over the graphics!). Once the Stunt course begins, your rider should head for loops, building point multipliers for every succeasful pass, while the more advanced jet-skier can pile on the points by executing a variety of daredevil poaes! Each hoop scores 50 points and they are essential if you want to reach first place on the atunt mode podium.

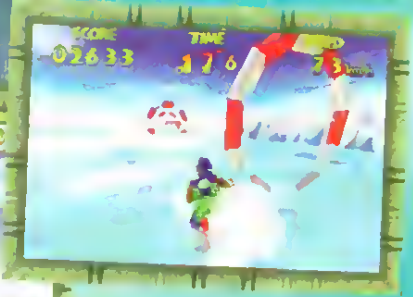


There'a three aweaome airborne maneuvers your rider can perform (while scooting about in choppy water, I might add); and these include the loop (pull your craft up and over your head and back down again), the twist (awing the aki to the right and left before landing) and the submarine (actually dive underwater after a jump!). Cooler still are the wild (and often hilarious) atancea your character can adopt during a race. These are the Handstand (hands on the bar grips but feet high in the air!), the Hood Hop (spin onto the front of the aki and face the camera!), the Mad Stance (stand atop your vea-aei and control with





...) and finally, the somersault ... into the air without your jet-ski while in motion!). Have you the nerve and skill to master all these moves, and use them in the competition mode? Oh, one final point is the time limit. While it might make sense to retry some jumps for additional points you probably only have enough time for one extra loop







...line with a ... you cross the finish ... are added to your over- ... in first place. ... and nothing new appeared ... any secrets. What about ... the very hard setting? Chance to race ... find this out and much more check out our ... next issue of GameFan.












ULTRA RALLY

THIS COULD BE THE BEST RACER YET! LOOK AT THESE GAME SCREENS MOVING AT 60FPS!

PREVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - BOSS STUDIOS

PUBLISHER - KEMCO

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - 4TH QTR



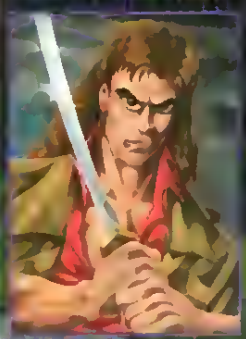




PICTURED RIGHT, THESE SGI EMULATED REPLAY DEMOS LOOK AMAZING! CAN THE GAME LOOK THIS GOOD?



If you're like me, you're asking yourself one question right now... Are these shots real? And you're seeing video grabs. You should see this demo live! It's truly remarkable. The shots with screen text are the actual article emulating from the devsystem. The game moves at a blistering pace, has night-lighting that'll make you cry, (high-beams emit actual light which cuts through the fog) and looks so real in every aspect that it's hard to believe you'll soon be playing it on you're $200.00 Nintendo hardware. Like *WaveRace*, if you saw this game in the arcade you'd drop a ton of quarters in it. As soon as Kemco gets us a ROM we'll bring you the game in all its glory. *ES*



E. Storm





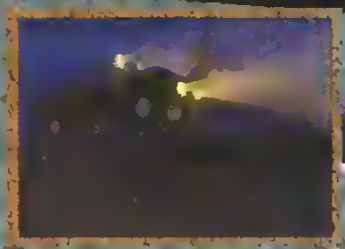


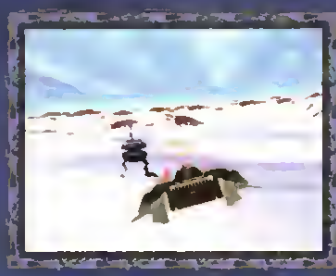














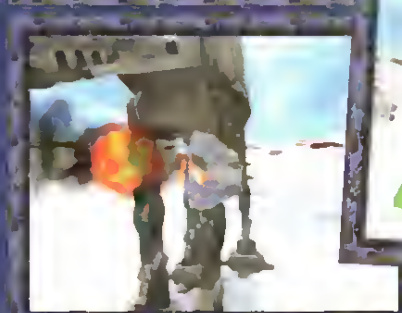

THE STAR WARS SAGA CONTINUES! TAKE ON BLACK SUN AND THE EMPIRE!

SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

One of the greatest movie licenses ever has finally been revealed in an almost complete form. The GameFan staff spent three whole days dissecting a 70% finished version of one of the most eagerly awaited titles of the decade while chatting with some of the development team responsible for this mammoth undertaking. The game features breath-taking scenery, a cast of familiar (and not so familiar faces) and an epic struggle of good over evil in a galaxy far, far away...





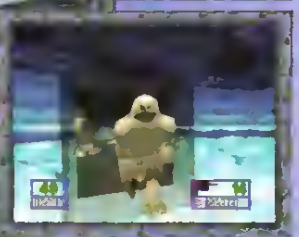



The name of this game? *Shadows of the Empire*. The system of choice? The Nintendo 64.

It was surprising to learn just exactly when LucasArts began the *Shadows* project: "We started developing in September 1994. We worked for nine months on an Onyx Workstation without any kind of hardware, on the assumption that Nintendo would meet the specifications, which they did." LucasArts went on to comment that the Nintendo 64 hardware was excellent to get to grips with: "Everyone is still learning about hardware when a new machine comes out. Just look at the Super NES games five years ago compared to these days. There's always scope for improvement so we demanded a certain level of performance and were happy that the N64 gave us that." This 'performance' was even changed later into the project when Nintendo "actually improved the hardware. Two or three times they improved the specifications from what they originally told us."

STAGE 1: WHO WILL WIN THE BATTLE OF HOTH?!

The title continued to


STAGE 2: CAN DASH RENDAR ESCAPE FROM ECHO BASE?!

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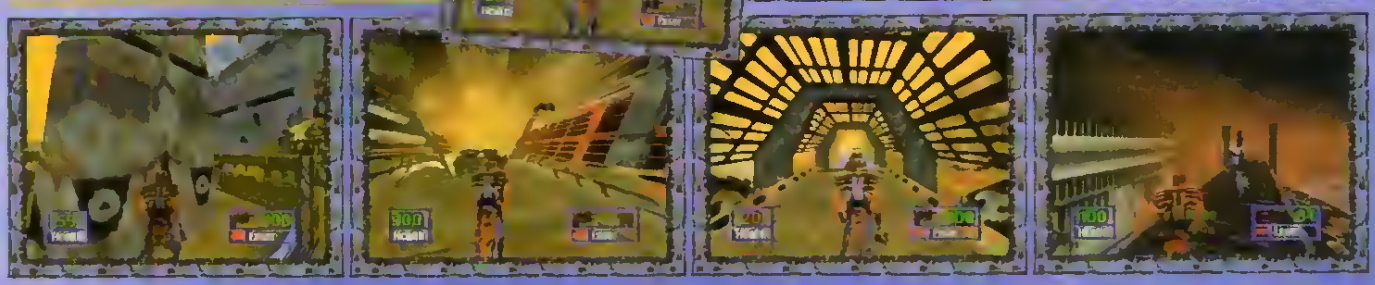
THE ASTEROID FIELD IS THE DAUNTING SETTING FOR STAGE 31



be shaped and molded, and seeing the success of the *Star Wars*-related novels, LucasArts chose a setting and character for the game itself (*Shadows* takes place between *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*). LucasArts decided not to base the game directly on the novel because each separate LucasArts-related game company "takes on a different skew or focus. For example, [the team who created] *Dork Forces* focused on Kyle Katarn, *Shadows* focuses on Dash Rendar, who is a secondary character in the novel, but we thought it was important that he could do a lot in the game that would be fun for the player. Han Solo and Luke aren't really available to us." For me, Dash seems the perfect choice as the hero of this quest; a tough no-nonsense, tough-talking bounty hunter and buddy of Han Solo. If anyone can infiltrate Imperial bases, fly through waves of Tie fighters and go head-to-head with Boba Fett, this grizzled mercenary can!

After months of build-up, excited waiting and glimpses of it at various trade shows, *Shadows of the Empire* is all set and ready to back up the American launch of the Nintendo 64. The finished game has two levels available to any budding Jedi, with numerous options (difficulty setting, passwords, et cetera) and that instant *Star Wars* ambiance that LucasArts is so famed for. As you'd expect, this is a graphical feast unmatched by anything out there (unless you're counting other N64 titles), and despite a few reservations (such as slightly limp explosions, glitching, a lack of enemies, and some misting problems) this looks to be another piece of gaming heaven...

STAGE 4: THE DRD MANTELL JUNKYARD!



PREVIEW

Before we launch into the game properly, let's address the perceived problem of audio on the cartridge-based N64. First, you don't notice a lack of sound quality anywhere in this game, and with good reason. Let the LucasArts developers take up the story... "The music is taken directly from the original Skywalker sound archives. It isn't CD or anything like that, but from the original source, so it's the purest form. We took snippets from each level and looped them to about 15 minutes in length because you can't have a whole CD full of sound on a cartridge. The problem is the music takes up a lot of space on a cartridge, but we compressed a lot. We thought this was worthwhile because it gives you a true *Star Wars* experience, which demands a certain kind of

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - LUCASARTS

PUBLISHED - NINTENDO

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - VARIABLE

AVAILABLE - DECEMBER 2ND



CHIEF HAMBLETON
THE FORCE IS SO STRONG!

"We started developing in September 1994. We worked for nine months on on Onyx Workstation without any kind of hardware, on the assumption that Nintendo would meet the specifications, which they did." - *Mark Haigh-Hutchinson, Project Leader*






STAGE 5: WATCH YOUR STEP AT GALL SPACEPORT

music. The listener expects that orchestral, John Williams score. We chose the music very carefully and took some from the new *Shadows of the Empire* soundtrack. It really enhances the game."

Talking of the game, what's the title actually like to play? For me, the first adrenaline-soaked stage is still my current favorite. After I'd picked my jaw up from the floor, I began frantically weaving my snowspeeder towards the advancing Imperial forces as they attacked my Rebel Hoth base. Radio chatter cut in, laser fire rocked my craft, and hydraulics from the legs of the Imperial AT-ST walkers could even be heard as they grinded away in the background. I was playing the film; it was as simple as that. But when those AT-ATs zoomed into my field of vision... I sat silently in awe, before exploding into shouts of "Red Five standing by!" and "Stay on target!" I swung my snowspeeder about and headed right for the legs, zooming straight through them while my CPU wingmen peeled off to take down the other two AT-ATs. With the piercing shrill of laser fire all around, I headed straight for the AT-AT's neck... and was shot to fragments in a matter of seconds... Oops.







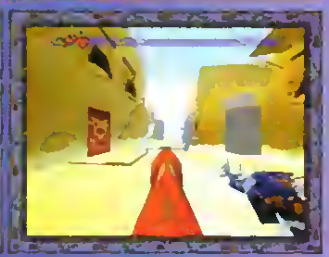

The demolition of my Snowspeeder taught me one important point: These Imperial troopers aren't taking any prisoners! I found that the difficulty setting was tough, but set just right; another important consideration for the LucasArts crew: "It is hard to cater to the novice and experienced player. One of the beauties of the hardware is that you can basically have the CPU available to do AI while the other hardware is doing the rendering, which is nice because you now have a 90 megahertz CPU available just to do the game stuff rather than worrying about drawing scenes. Look at the Hoth battle scene. Those guys [Imperial walkers] are tracking you. They could nail you. I had to tone those guys down considerably. The scope is certainly there for us to do a lot more. You've just got to make it fun. It could be the most intelligent boss in the world but if it just kills you outright, what's the point? You have to get the balance right."

Space prevents me from detailing the remaining levels in the same manner as the Hoth battle extravaganza, but let's just say I was extremely excited by the whole package. The majority of the later levels take place through the eyes of Dash as he draws his laser pistol (the Han Solo variety) and guns down Snowtroopers, Wampas and even that king of the Star Wars mythos, Boba Fett (who eventually tires of your puny attempts and clambers into Slave I to finish you off!). The camera




STAGE 6: SWOOP BIKES RACE TO VICTORY THROUGH MOS EISLEY AND BEGGARS CANYON!!





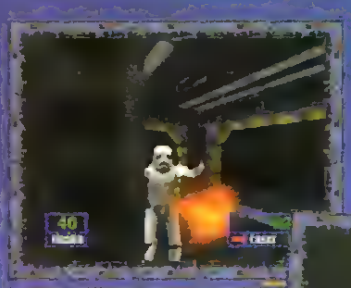
can be changed to eye-view, behind Dash, ceiling and *Resident Evil* viewpoints. Real *Star Wars* fans will lap up the inclusion of IG-88 (robotic Bounty Hunter with attitude) as a boss at the end of the Junkyard stage, which has Dash leaping from train carriages and ducking overhead beams as the carriage in front explodes and sinks into a swamp...

This change in stage design between levels has always been part of the LucasArts ideal, and the developers stressed this point: "We put a lot into this game that people haven't really seen before in a video game. One of the strong points is that *Shadows* is more like five or six games in one. We wanted a lot for the player to experience rather than one particular genre. This is great for the player, but difficult for us; it's like writing five games. We also give the player new experiences; take for example the train level. I can't recall seeing any 3D trains in a video game before. This is a new kind of environment. Everyone's seen those Western movies with people riding the top of trains. We're giving you this new experience in the appropriate *Stor Wors* environment."

The fun doesn't end with the destruction of IG-88, either. There's a frantic race at mind-numbing speeds through Mos Eisley on new versions of Speederbikes (known as Swoop bikes), where you'll have to [illegible] your fellow racers before they intercept a certain Mr. Sky[illegible] watch for the Sarlaac pit beasts!), and then of course, the Imperial Sewers. Oh, did we have fun on this level! For a start, Dash is equipped with a jetpack (used previously to dart past Boba Fett) and can submerge totally in the pungent slime. The misting effect of the effluent and murky water is astonishing (you can almost smell it!), and so is the ferocity of the lurking Dianoga (cue the infamous trash compacting scene from *Star Wars*)! Of course, we aren't showing the last couple of levels and the boarding of Skyhook to face Xizor (pronounce *thot* one!), but believe me, the action increases to truly frenetic proportions! You cannot resist the power... of the Dark side!

Shadows of the Empire is rumored to be currently undergoing final tweaking by Mr. Miyamoto himself (we *know* the force is with him!), but, whether this is true or not , the finisbed *Shodows* looks set to take America by storm, and I'm expecting to update you very shortly with a run-down of exactly what's on offer here. Until next [illegible] level [illegible]. May the force be with you... ***CH***

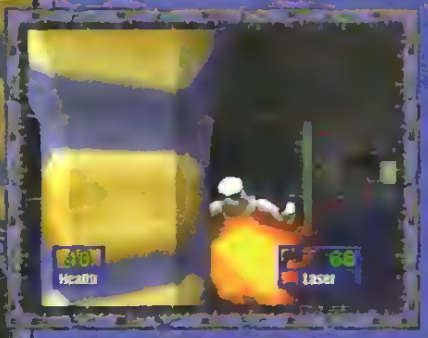
SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE







IMPERIAL FREIGHTER SUPROSA IS THE SCENE FOR STAGE 7









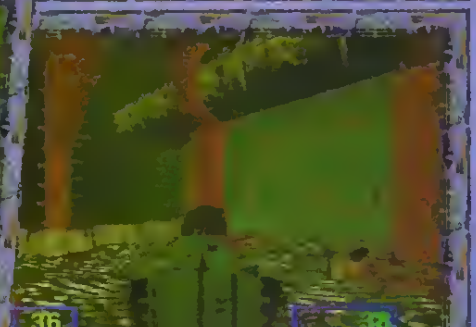




STAGE 8: IT'S DARK DOWN IN THE SEWERS OF IMPERIAL CITY







MORE INCREDIBLE SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE IN THE NEXT FORCE-CHARGED ISSUE OF GAMEFAN!

Special thanks to: Mark Haigh-Hutchinson, LucasArts and Nintendo.

PREVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - RARE

PUBLISHER - NINTENDO

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

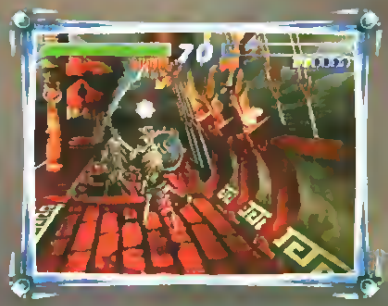
AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER 25



MR. GOO
TIME TO PLAY HARD WITH THE 64-BIT FEELIN'!







The *Killer Instinct* story started almost two years ago when it appeared in selected arcades across the country. Advertised as the first ever entirely SGI-rendered fighting game on the market, *KI* also promised a perfect home translation, because the arcade motherboard was in essence an early N64 (then titled the Ultra 64 until a name patent in Japan prevented it) motherboard. Aside from teasing hard-core gamers with such promises, *KI* delivered new innovations like Auto-Doubies, Ultimates and Combo Breakers in a genuinely groundbreaking formula. All of these factors made *KI* a solid fighting game, and at most arcades generated as much competition between gamers as (dare I say it?) the all-mighty *Street Fighter*.

Here we are almost two years later and we've seen *KI2* hit the arcades with yet more additions and just as much player competition. Now, step aside, unworthy fighters, and greet *KI Gold*, the long-awaited N64 sequel in the popular *KI* series (only *Killer Instinct 1* made a SNES appearance, but sold millions). Not since the days of *Tekken 2* has an arcade fighting game actually been made better for the home market. Folks, this ain't just a conversion from heaven above, but it quite possibly could be the best 2-D fighter to come home for '96!

Killer Instinct Gold includes the entire original cast from *Killer Instinct 2*, and presents Jago, Fulgore, Combo, Kim Wu, Tusk, Maya, Orchid, Spinal, Glacius, Sabrewulf and Gargos in all their 64-bit glory. Unfortunately, the new characters which were expected have yet to be seen in any of the ROMs we have previewed. When questioned about this, Nintendo reps replied, "Which would your rather have? New characters, and an unbalanced game? Or no new characters and a balanced game?" We get the







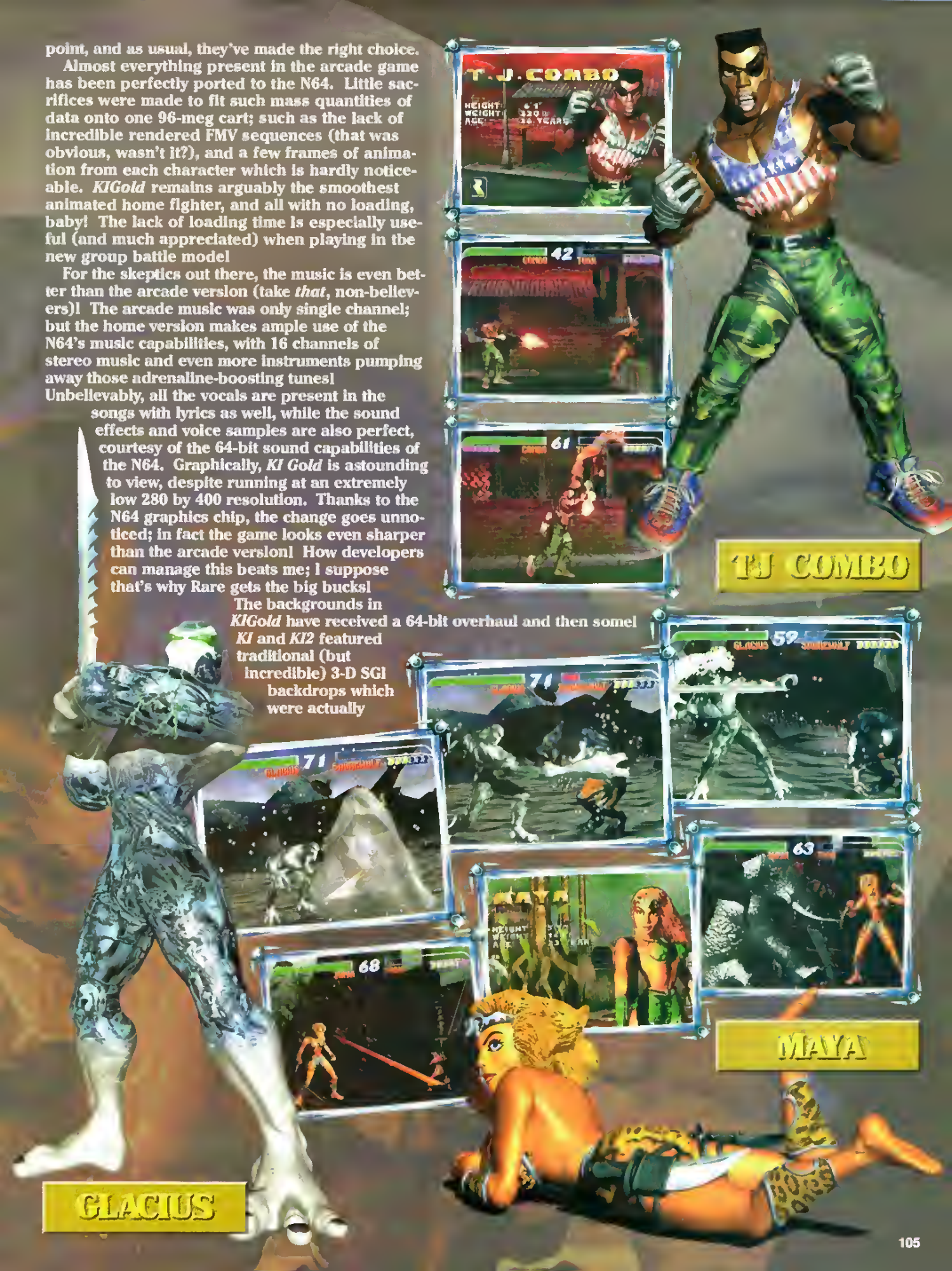


point, and as usual, they've made the right choice.

Almost everything present in the arcade game has been perfectly ported to the N64. Little sacrifices were made to fit such mass quantities of data onto one 96-meg cart; such as the lack of incredible rendered FMV sequences (that was obvious, wasn't it?), and a few frames of animation from each character which is hardly noticeable. *KIGold* remains arguably the smoothest animated home fighter, and all with no loading, baby! The lack of loading time is especially useful (and much appreciated) when playing in the new group battle mode!

For the skeptics out there, the music is even better than the arcade version (take *that*, non-believers)! The arcade music was only single channel; but the home version makes ample use of the N64's music capabilities, with 16 channels of stereo music and even more instruments pumping away those adrenaline-boosting tunes! Unbelievably, all the vocals are present in the songs with lyrics as well, while the sound effects and voice samples are also perfect, courtesy of the 64-bit sound capabilities of the N64. Graphically, *KI Gold* is astounding to view, despite running at an extremely low 280 by 400 resolution. Thanks to the N64 graphics chip, the change goes unnoticed; in fact the game looks even sharper than the arcade version! How developers can manage this beats me; I suppose that's why Rare gets the big bucks!

The backgrounds in *KIGold* have received a 64-bit overhaul and then some! *KI* and *KI2* featured traditional (but incredible) 3-D SGI backdrops which were actually



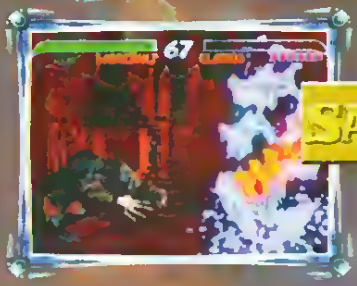


streamed FMV; a process many thought impossible to replicate on the N64, let alone on a cartridge format. The 3D stages in *KIGold* are of course, arcade perfect. Some changes were made, but for the better. For example Combo's stage in the arcade was nothing more than a pseudo-3D floor (looking more like a Mode-7 trick) and a flat, pasted background which was in much need of more parallax scrolling. Now Combo's stage is a 3D parking lot leading to a Metro station. Amazingly, Rare actually paid attention to little details like changing the lighting on the characters to match the flashing red and green lights when they're duking it out beside the loading area. Actual buildings and fences are now present and rendered on the fly (wait 'til you see the awesome pan-in shot at the beginning of a round!); trash cans are also thrown into the mix, and can be knocked over when a player lands on them. All these additions are made possible because of the lower resolution (best I've ever seen!), and the fact that the characters on screen are not polygons but sprites. To keep a frame rate of 60fps, the anti-aliasing is turned off, but yet again this is hardly noticeable. Perhaps the best improvement to Combo's background is the addition of a stage fatality; when standing beside the tracks, the final knock-out blow sends your foe high into the air, landing on the tracks in front of an oncoming train! As for the FMV backgrounds, they have been converted to 3D backgrounds like Combo's stage. They all remain as visually stunning as the arcade (just wait until you get a load of Jago's stage!). It's simply perfection!

The gameplay remains identical to *KI2*. The big (and I mean *big*) combos found in the arcade are all present in the home conversion. Using a set combo format, players are able to input their own parameters to vary their combos, as long as they are within that character's combo format. The general format is to commence with an opening move or Opener (this is usually a special move) that must connect. The opener can be followed by Auto-Doubles. An Auto-Double is a free hit awarded after an opener when it is followed by a punch or kick attack of a weaker value than the opener. Follow this with a Linker: a special move which acts as a transition move and can be fol-





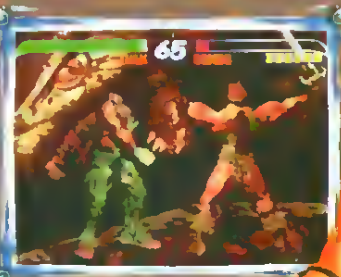


SABREWULF

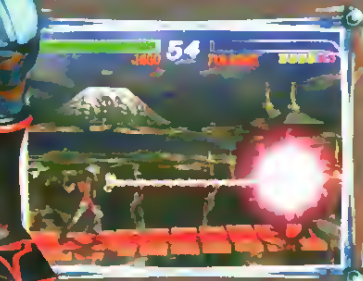








JAGO





TUSK



lowed up with an Auto-Double. Finish the combo off with an Endspecial. The Endspecial is a powered up version of a special move, which is allotting more hits than it would normally have. Huh? Confused? Thankfully the geniuses at Rare have also included a Training mode to properly teach new players the basics of combo building and other nuances, like Combo Breakers, and reversing an Opener.

Other healthy additions were made to the home version to add to the overall replay value. A new group battle has been added (the tournament mode also returns) where two players go head-to-head with a team of 3 to 9 combatants. The victor of the final match must win by a No Mercy (fatality), or an Ultra Combo to finish the match. Two pages of advanced options are also available. The options range from changing the speed of fireballs, turning off throws, disabling blocking and our favorite: an invisibility mode! When fighting with invisibility turned on, the player who scores a hit first slowly fades out. When hit, the player will then become visible again as the opponent slowly turns invisible and vice versa. This can be especially fun when performing combos on your opponent, making it much harder to perform a Combo Breaker!

The endings in *KIGold* are a bit hurtin', especially when compared to the arcade version. The endings are like the SNES version of *Killer Instinct*; made by recycling the game's sprites and backgrounds with overlaid text. Though our early ROM only had a few endings, one can assume all the endings will be done in this manner. Nonetheless, they're still fun to watch!

Although we've only seen a 90% version of the game, it's safe to say this game is a must-buy for any fighting fan who's lucky enough to own an N64. GameFan's staff had to be pried away from the cart when the Nintendo reps had to leave! Too bad guys, *KIGold* won't be on the shelves for couple more months, but you can bet we'll return for a whole load more fisticuff action!

MG





TITLE	GOEMON 5
COMPANY	KONAMI
ETA	DECEMBER (JAPAN)
GENRE	ACTION PLATFORM

This is a full-on polygon 3D adventure based on the Goeman series in which you must defeat certain obstacles before you can progress. There's also a Mecha combat stage and your movement will fully utilize the 3D stick.











Other stages include a stroll downtown, causing destruction and collecting power-ups for future cockpit battles. There's four characters to choose from and even a juicy two player cooperation mode!"

TITLE	ROBOTECH
COMPANY	GAMETEK
ETA	DECEMBER (USA)
GENRE	SHOOTER



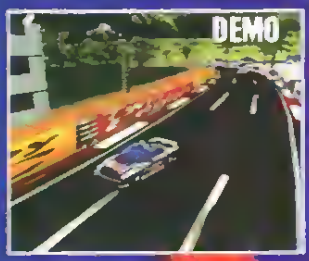




Robotech continues to impress with huge polygon robots battling through space. Multiple camera angles and smooth scrolling are promised...

TITLE	REV LIMIT
COMPANY	SETA
ETA	FIRST QTR '97 (JAPAN)
GENRE	ARCADE RACING

Customize your car, and race with real-time damage! Hey, I've seen that Castrol Celica somewhere before...



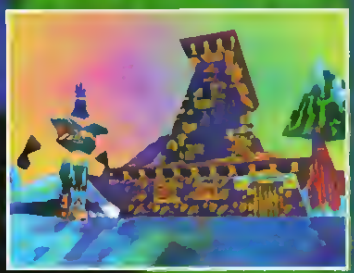


Another month, another load of shots from the Freak Boy stable! This seems to be coming along nicely, with polygons added to both characters and scenery. Look at that sky!

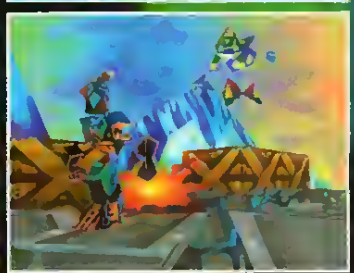


TITLE	FREAK BOY
COMPANY	VIRGIN
ETA	FIRST QTR '97 (USA)
GENRE	ACTION PLATFORM









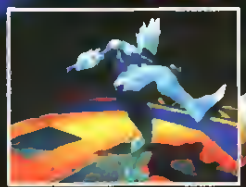
TITLE	DUEL HEROES
COMPANY	HUDSON
ETA	UNKNOWN (JAPAN)
GENRE	FIGHTING

Gai and Zen (red and blue) are the characters so far revealed in this super-hero based fighter.



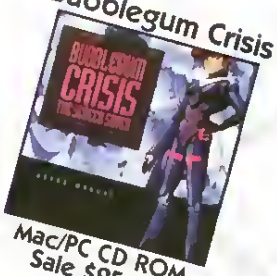






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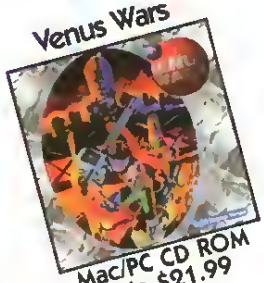
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Hidden throughout this issue of GAMEFAN are Grid Runner Flag Icons that look like this:
(Be sure to count the one pictured here!)



ONE GRAND PRIZE
3 First Prizes
10 Second Prizes

Just like the action characters in Grid Runner, your goal is to find and "get" flags so that you can be successful in this contest. Count the flags and send your answer to us. Those readers who respond with the correct number of flags will be eligible for a drawing for the fabulous prizes provided by GAMEFAN and Virgin Interactive, the makers of Grid Runner.







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- Two rooms for one night at e hotel/motel near Six Flags
- Transportation to and from Six Flags
- One game system and one copy of Grid Runner
- One year subscription (or extension) to GAMEFAN magazine

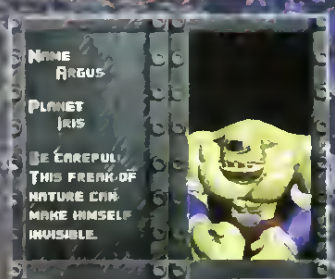
First Prize – Three Winners (each winner receives)

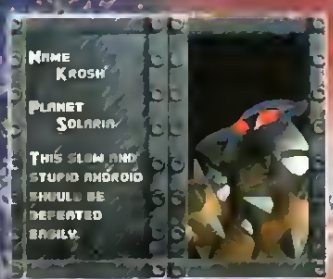
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- One copy each of two other Virgin Interactive games
- One game system
- One year subscription (or extension) to GAMEFAN magazine

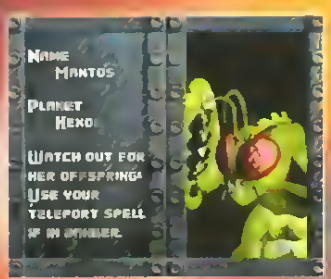
Second Prize – Ten Winners (each winner receives)

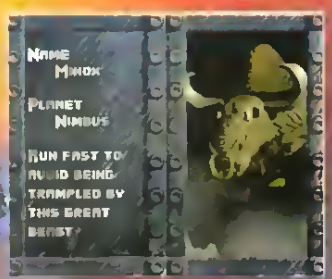
- One copy of Grid Runner
- One year subscription (or extension) to GAMEFAN magazine

"(Grid Runner is) unique, challenging and packed with addictive gameplay..." — GAMEFAN magazine









Winners will be selected by a random drawing from all entries containing the correct number of flags in this November 1996 issue of GAMEFAN.

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grid runner™



To enter: Either complete the form provided (photocopies will also be accepted) or respond at the GAMEFAN website at http://www.gamefan.com. All contest entries must arrive at the GAMEFAN offices on or before February 15, 1997.

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PREVIEW

LAYOUT - E. STORM



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CLIMAX

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - DECEMBER



DARK SAVIOR

ダークセイバー

One of a handful of games that shook me to my very core was *LandStalker*. At the time (1993) it was untouchable in both the action and role-playing categories. Now, some 3 years later Climax's next such game is upon us, and although it's not a sequel, and definitely not as ground-breaking as its predecessor, it is one of the year's best Action RPGs. A new fighting system has been added to the isometric polygonal formula, the puzzles and character interaction remain intact and as usual Climax delivers an inspired soundtrack.

DS's most unique aspect, however, is its use of parallels. Each time you end a quest you awake to another, longer, harder one (oh, I don't like the sound of that). There are 5 parallels that we know of, making *Dark Savior* one of the longest games of its kind. Still better news, however, is that rather than an import review, this is an American preview. DS hit Japan in August and will arrive here this November/December. A mere 4 month window. Perhaps SOA's new Japanese CEO has something to do with this? Either way, it's high time Sega sped these games our way before they become relics. Look for a DS review in the next GF and an in-depth strategy guide in issue 2 of MegaFan.



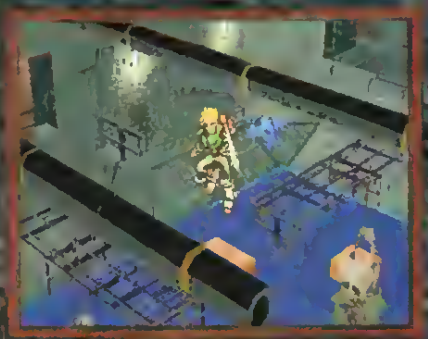
E. Storm

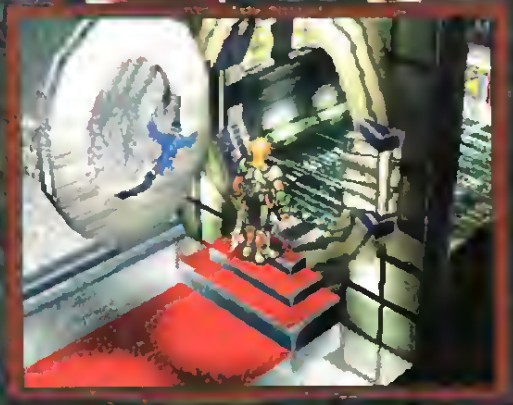
Merry Christmas?

IS CLIMAX'S *DARK SAVIOR* TO THE SATURN WHAT *LANDSTALKER* WAS TO THE GENESIS?



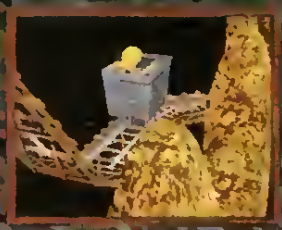






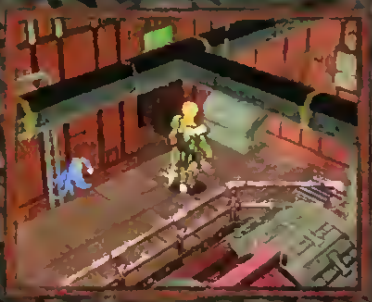






Is this an E-ticket ride?

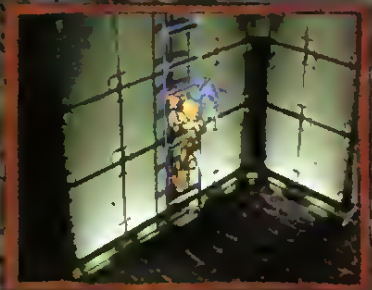
ADVENTURE! Ryu never knows what's waiting for him next. Here he takes to the rails in a crazy mining cart ride. Careful – Dr. Jones was the last guy through here!

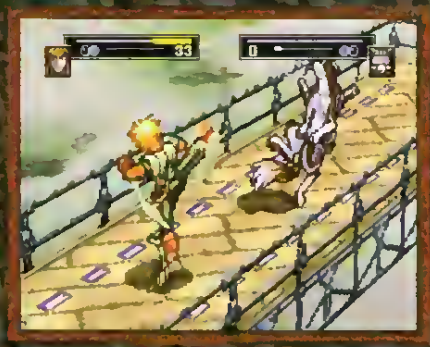






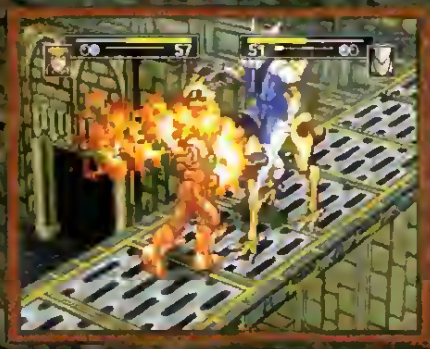

PUZZLES! Puzzles like this mind bender are everywhere! Here, Ryu gets a hero's-eye view of his work.









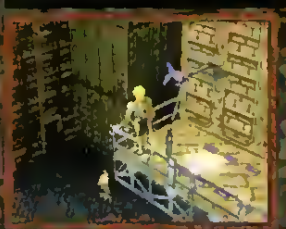
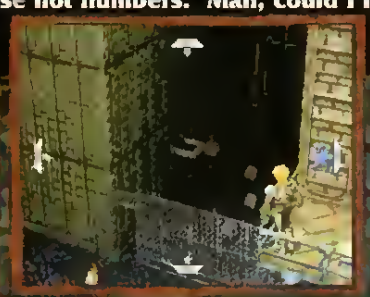



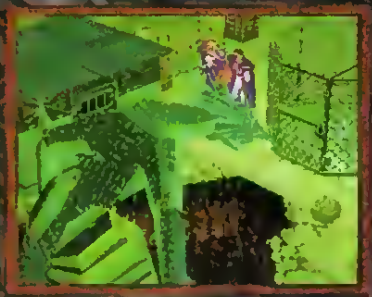
FIGHT! While Dark Savior's fight engine isn't nearly as complex as you'd find in an actual fighter, it gets the job done. This is how every battle unfolds, so you'll have to master what technique exists. You can block, dash, jump, and power up your gauge for a super combo. When the opportunity arises, capture your opponents. You can use them in battle for the rest of the parallel!



FLY-CAM! Dark Savior's fully adjustable, panning, zooming, twisting camera is the best one I've ever encountered. All polygonal action games should have one of these hot numbers. Man, could I have used this in LandStalker.

Look how far you can see!



...and Scavenger released AMOK-GameFan's cover story, FEB. 1996. An upstart company bursting with talent, Scavenger has gone at their own pace, made the best distribution deal possible for their amazing line-up of software and are now finally ready to share it with the rest of us. The AMOK you're seeing here is a 100% buttoned up, ready-to-play version. In fact, you may be playing it by the time this issue hits the stands. What makes AMOK such a celebrated title amongst industry and press is what makes all Scavenger games so impressive: its 3D engine. All of Scavengers games use patented Scavenger engines and they are regarded (to those who have seen them) as revolutionary. They take up to a year to make, but oh, the end result... freshness! As you can see, these vast lands in which you can travel anywhere at a blistering pace, are not polygonal. There are no ugly fake dirt texture maps, no clipping and they look completely different than anything else in 32-bit land. Of course, where you lose the annoyance of textures, you pick up growing pixels, but it's a fair trade. If I play another Krazy Ivan or Ghen War clone, I'm gonna toss some cookies. The enemies (nasty fat little killers) are also, thankfully, not of the polygon way. So they actually look like



little people, not dolls constructed from hordes of triangles. These vivid little sprites appear to have thickness as well. I'll tell ya, these guys are good! I can't stop playing AMOK. It evokes such a mood from the second you begin it's like playing on new hardware. And gameplay, you want gameplay? AMOK will not be beaten in a day. No way. You'll have to play in hard mode to progress beyond mission 2 and that means memorizing the location of each infantry, secret retreat (shoot the walls), land mine, etc... the list is long. Each mission is a game unto itself and the control... straight out of heaven, as is the soundtrack. I find it odd that I've been playing 32-bit Scavenger games for over a year and the public has yet to experience one. I can't tell you how happy I am that they're finally putting this in a box for you to play. Scorcher will follow AMOK and is equally amazing. Hopefully AMOK will be but the first in a long line of legendary Saturn wares. And finally, to the powers-that-be at SOA... Take good care of these guys; they've got your hardware humming.

ES









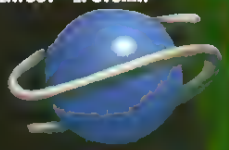


DO NOT ADJUST YOUR TELEVISION. YOU ARE ENTERING, THE SCAVENGER ZONE.


IT SWIMS
IT RUNS
IT SHOOTS
IT KILLS... AND
IT'S ALL YOURS!
REVIEW
LAYOUT · E. STORM
SEGA SATURN
DEVELOPER - SCAVENGER
PUBLISHER - SCAVENGER
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED
AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER

UPDATE

LAYOUT - E. STORM



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - AWAY TEAM

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

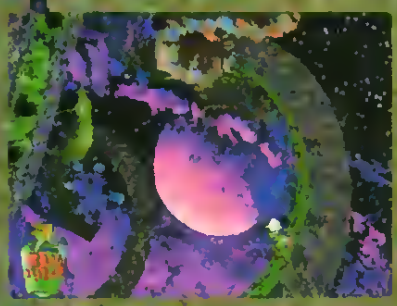
AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER











"IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE A BUG BARF!"

We're seeing more and more of the first *BUG!* sequel every month. This time, we've been bugging around with Bug and his pals through some killer new locations. I'm amazed by not only the sheer magnitude of levels but by their gargantuan size as well. There's a lot... a ton, of polygons moving around here.

Space Corkscrew, one of the many unique, new, redesigned levels (buttoned up in this version) features dizzying rotation effects. More than a couple passers-by gazed in my office window at the sight of this craziness. The bosses levels are shaping up too, and now include a unique event that has you racing your Bug convertible (yeah, I get it) through a chaotic (and very fun) first person space race.

Bug's control seems tighter than ever and his new moves (Bug can now dash, hover and has unlimited Bug Juice, yummy) give the game a much needed dose of diversity. Bug's dog is just as cool. Superfly however... I retese to play. This is a lame character and so far *BUG TOO!*'s only flaw, in my eyes. It's just too cliche for my taste. Trends die (this one will hopefully be burned at the stake), but good games don't... 'nuff said. I'll have no troubles ignoring him however and enjoying this much anticipated (and much improved) *BUG!* sequel. The next time you see *BUG TOO!* in GF it'll be for the final play test. It is safe to say however that *BUG!* fans will likely be elated when *BUG TOO!* rolls around in November. Sega's new star is shining brighter than ever. **ES**

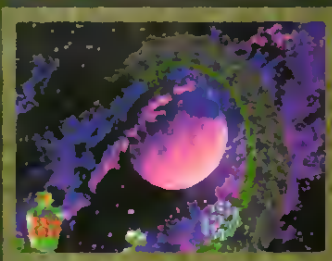


"I'M BUG'S DOG. WHY A BUG HAS A DOG WE'LL PERHAPS NEVER KNOW."

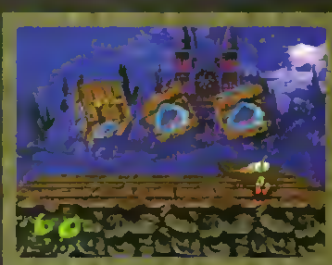


















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PlayStation

NINTENDO64

M2 (COMING IN '97)

SEGA SATURN



THREE DIRTY DWARVES

REVIEW



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - APPALOOSA

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-3

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



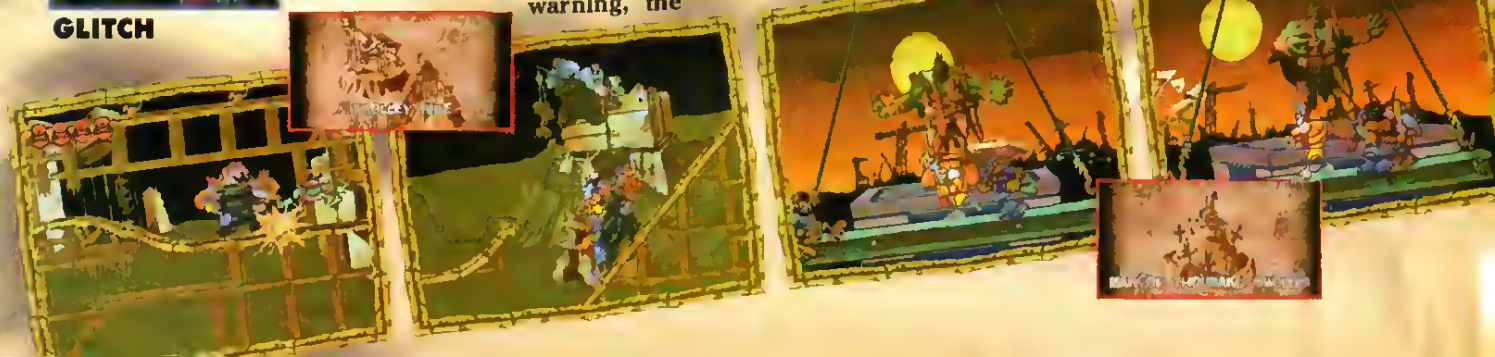
GLITCH



The story of the *Three Dirty Dwarves* is a sad, sad tale: Four genius kids, living happy and free within their globe of friendship, seek to smash the threshold of modern genetics, by participating in an un-tested military experiment. Although it's unclear as to whether these kids entered the experiment to achieve personal satisfaction or to garner notoriety from their critical peers, the results were all too obvious. After a complete cell restructure, their world changes forever and they are shunned by all. Vying for an escape from this living hell, the kids decide to spend their days playing a fantasy role-playing game. In their final session, the genetically altered children play the roles of three heroic dwarves – battling to end their captivity under the tyranny of the sinister General Briggs. After many hours, the game demands one roll of the dice, at one all-important impass in the Dwarves' adventure. As the dice clatter to a halt, the air suddenly vibrates with a mysterious energy, sending a stream of magical essence into the room. Without warning, the children are separated from each other, and the Three Dirty Dwarves are thrust through a transdimensional vortex that drops them in the streets of Neau Yorkus.



The Dwarves crash land in a sporting goods store, and instinct commands them to defend themselves. Greg, Taconic, and Corthag brandish baseball bats, bowling pins, footballs and baseballs, and head off into this strange new world with their modern-age fighting tools. They know, somehow, that the children are prisoners of Briggs, and to pull off the rescue they must battle through the armies of creatures who have teleported through the gateway after them. I realize that I've chronicled a pretty extensive story here, but hey, this game is like playing a comic book, and comics are typically heavy on plot. The Dwarves battle across 15 long, side-scrolling levels with ungodly amounts of enemy Orcs, killer babies, wacked-out robots, and insane bosses. Play alone and you'll have all three Dwarves under your control





(alternately; sorta like *Lost Vikings*), play two players and you both share from the pool of three, and finally, a three-player, multi-tapped game is possible.

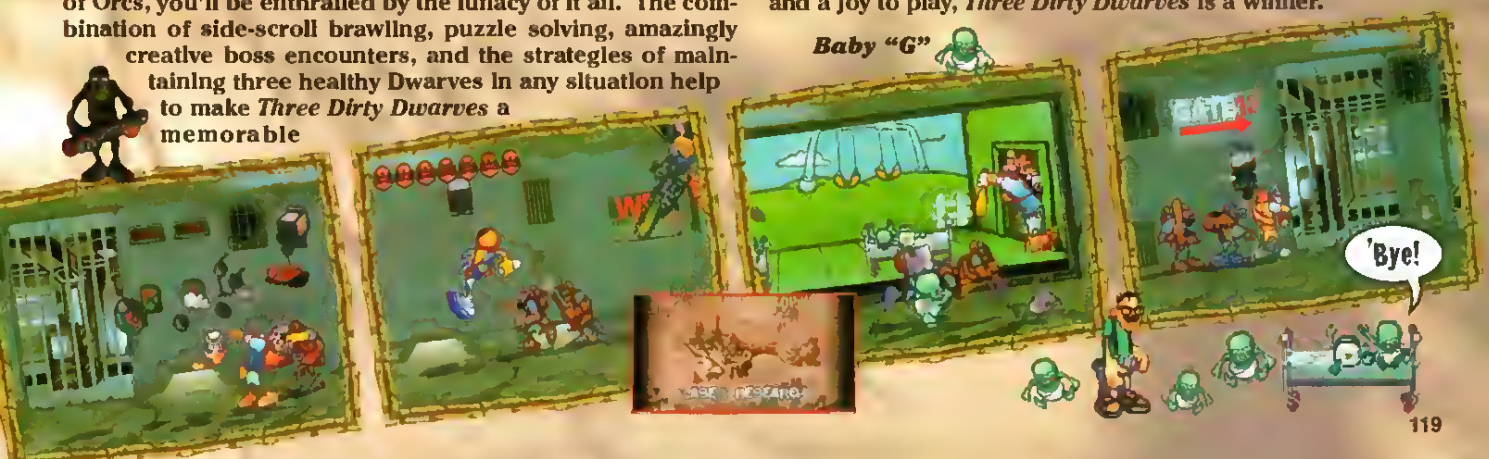
Diving into the actual game, it's obvious that you won't be piecing together any 10-hit combos (or executing fireballs), but *Three Dirty Dwarves* contains just the right amount of moves necessary for its brand of fighting. Toss up baseballs and bat them into the craniums of your foes, or roll strikes with bowling balls that pound into the shins of bad guys; it's all for humor, and always in bad (but good!) taste. Get in close and you can throw their Orc butts, or, if they're in the background, blow 'em apart with shotgun blasts and cock-tail bombs. If the action starts peaking out and your Dwarves are smack in the middle of Pummelfest '96, use the Morph Dwarf mode to combine your threesome into one titanic mauler with a berserker rage that nobody can resist. The biggest piece of advice I could give *3DD* players is this: Always keep <u>all</u> of your Dwarves alive. When they're down, hit 'em right away and they'll be back on their feet, ready for action. Learn the bizarre boss patterns well – whether it's steering a wrecking ball into a building with a dragon inside or playing baseball against a team of Orcs, you'll be enthralled by the lunacy of it all. The combination of side-scroll brawling, puzzle solving, amazingly creative boss encounters, and the strategies of maintaining three healthy Dwarves in any situation help to make *Three Dirty Dwarves* a memorable game after every play.

This game is truly a showcase of the Saturn's incredible 2-D computing power. The foreground parallaxes, the floor line scrolls, the backgrounds scale, the segmented bosses scale and rotate, the characters are ultra-colorful and animate like mini-cartoons (*good* cartoons), and the frame rate is blazing fast. The Saturn sound chip blasts out some impressive PCM funk, and the effects are loud and clear. Let's just say if there was ever to be a *Comix Zone 2* made for the Saturn, I would trust these developers to make perfect heads or tails of a video game comic world.



If action-adventure/side-scrollers are your thing (they should be everyone's thing!), do yourself a favor and check out *Three Dirty Dwarves*. It's just one of those titles you go back to again and again 'cause "I know I can kill that one guy *this* time" and enjoy every second doing it. It's the kind of game that'll have you stop to shout, "No way!" (especially when you see those freakin' bosses) and then play onward to see the next strange encounter. Highly original, long, tough, and a joy to play, *Three Dirty Dwarves* is a winner.

Baby "G"









REVIEW POWERSLAVE



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - LOBOTOMY
PUBLISHER - P.I.E.
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



CHIEF HAMBLETON "HAIL TO THE PHARAOH, BABY!"

Saturn owners seem to be getting a raw deal concerning 3D *Doom*-style games, with only the '*Doom*-on-a-rug' *Magic Carpet* appearing to stop the gap, while PlayStation owners can remain content with the release of not one but two *Dooms* on their system. All this is about to change however, with the arrival of a new breed of 3D shooting/action; coupling mindless violence with thought and cunning, not to mention jumping and some sparkling light-sourced projectiles. *Powerslave* (most aptly described as '*Doom*-in-Egypt') is here, and whisks you away on a mission to uncover terrifying secrets of Egyptian gods that have laid uncovered for thousands of years... Dare you don your desert-camouflage pantaloons and enter the towering pyramids of terror on a desperate quest where insanity and mayhem beckon? Well, only if you want to play the finest *Doom*-style game ever seen on the Saturn...



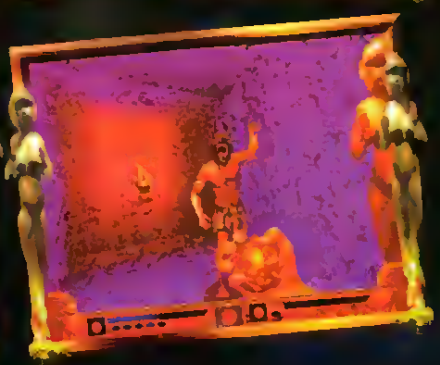
I greatly enjoyed my excursion into the hideous labyrinths of Egypt for a number of reasons; not least because of the incredible atmosphere this game generates. I've been interested in Egyptology for years, and was immediately sucked into the world of the Pharaohs when my exploration took me inside an ancient tomb complete with authentic hieroglyphics adorning the walls, crumbling cave systems with wooden supports creaking and whistling clifftops where vertigo-inducing jumps need to be performed. There's much more interaction with the scenery in this game; rock faces and antique caskets can be destroyed with mystic weapons, those leaps of faith will have you on the edge of your seat and there's frantic swimming sections where

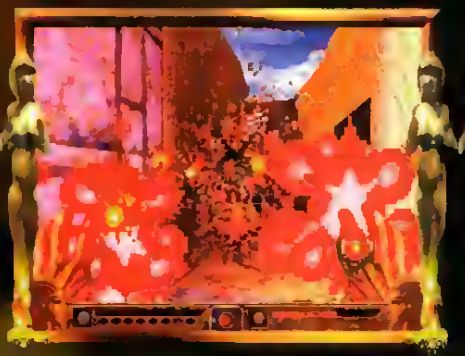











you're simuttaneously swiping at gnashing piranhas while thrashing tor air. *Powerslave* (aka *Exhumed*) also teatures puzzles so tiendish you'll be ripping out your hair and trothing at the mouth; a tull compliment ot creaking and groaning sounds and the most sickening bone crunching spot eftects when you don't quite make that all-important jump and end up plummeting downward into a molten lava pit!

PowerSlave steals and tweaks shamelessly trom a whole host ot earlier 3D games. The game structure is very like *Hexen*, as you have the option ot revisiting any ot the earlier levels when power-ups (which take the torm ot archaic artitacts) have been gained. Monsters are somewhat unique, but as a protessional *Doom*ster, I must admit that the dog-headed tireball throwers reacted with extremely similar intelligence to the brown imps ot the id game. Finally, I was also surprised to be using almost identical detonation devices to those supplied to me when I slipped into my rebel unitorm and thwarted the Imperial troops ot *Dark Forces*...



So, after wrestling with a tew rotting mummies, giant killer wasps and bouncing spiders, how did I rate *Powerslave*? Well, the lighting effects are truly outstanding. As you can see trom the screenshots, many attacks generate a glow ot bright (almost luminous) light, which is particularly spectacular in the darkened catacombs, with the blue tireballs ranking as the best light-sourced eftect ever seen on a 32-bit console! Monsters tit the atmosphere perfectly, and although 2D, they move convincingly (except perhaps tor the birds) and pursue you ruthlessly. Finally, the control ts *mostly* excellent; with rapid-tire gunning, strating and jumping all catered tor. Just don't expect to move sideways and jump every time it you're holding the detormed US joypad; these spongy-buttoned, badly-designed pads should really be ritually burnt in tavor ot the Japanese versions it you're really out to enjoy *Powerslave*.

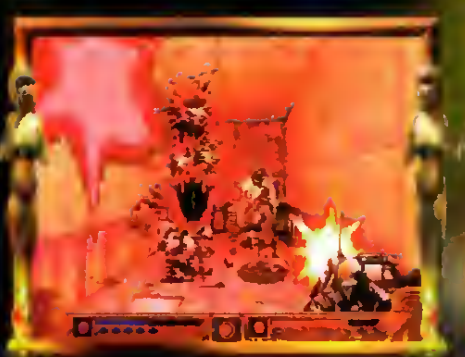




Only a couple ot points prevent this trom beating the legendary *Doom*. Firstly, there's a lack ot variety in the enemies, and there's not enough ol them in the levels to begin with. Secondly, those jumps sometimes require pinpoint precision, with tailure meaning instant death, sending you right back to the level start; t would have preferred my hero to tlounder in the lava betore discovering a secret passage just in the nick ot time... Thirdly, the weapons are sometimes novel, but are mainly just tweaked versions ot those seen countless times betore; it I have to kill one more enemy with a chaingun... Finally, some ot the puzzles are just a little too cunning; at one point I actually had to tall down a bottomless pit and scrabble tor a ledge in the dark...



I can detinitely forgive *Powerslave* these small tailings as Lobotomy software have delivered one stunning game which I have no hesitation in recommending to Saturn owners. Praise be to the designers tor trying something new and creating the Egyptian setting so admirably, and having the ability to include new(*ish*) and involving gameplay plus a real sense ot tension into the bargain. This will cartainly tide you over until *Doom* (tinally) gets a release.... ***CH***

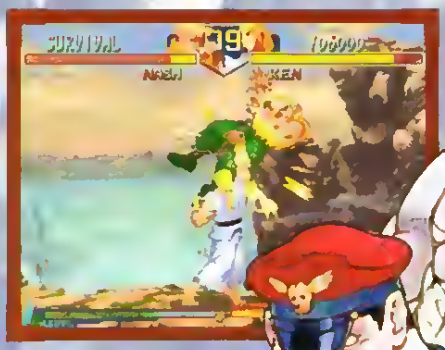

Well, fight fans, remember last issue when I compared the PlayStation version to a 50% complete Saturn version, and reckoned that the Sony effort was hotter? Well, I'm not afraid to eat my words, as I've just finished comparing completed versions of the two. And now what do I think? Well, the Saturn version wins hands down, as despite being an awesome conversion, the PlayStation effort really doesn't stand up well to this even-greater masterpiece. You all know what *Alpha 2* is about, so instead of re-hashing the new characters, moves and backgrounds, I'll compare both the finished versions...

First, that introduction. After wincing at the spooled FMV on the PlayStation, I was excited to see the exact arcade intro flashing up on my Saturn. The quality of the images really shine through here, and shows that with a little more work (and more on-board RAM), you can achieve arcade perfection. However, there's no bypsssing the introduction on the Saturn, whereas the PlayStation allows you to skip it and dive right into the game. After the intro comes the options, and here's where the Saturn shines through; you've got a Survival mode! Yep, choose your favorite character, jet off to Venezuela and battle every foe with only one energy bar! That should keep you amused for a while!

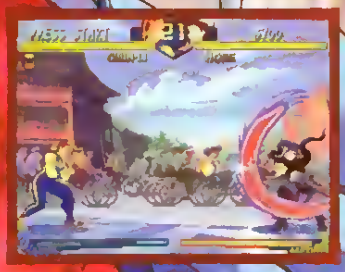
Next comes the bane of Nick Rox's life: missing character animation frames. While not quite as fanatical about this as the Nickster, I can see a marked difference between the two games, with the PlayStation missing many frames, while the Saturn copes admirably, sacrificing only a few frames here and there. Plus, if you choose same character versus same character, all the animation frames are there, and no matter who you choose, all standing and winning poses have many more frames of animation. For those unbelievers, place the two versions side by side, choose Zangief and watch him. He'll frown and grin on the Saturn, and remain frowning on

All artwork © Capcom 1996









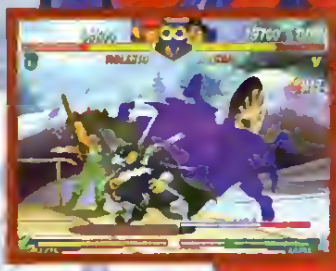
the PlayStetion. Of course, neither version matches the arcade, which actuelly shows the big Russian's teeth sparkle...

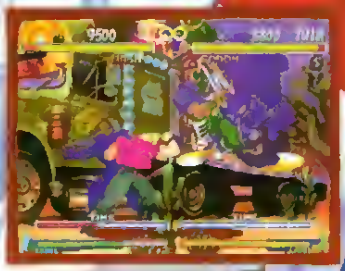
Moving on, the music is identical; cool arrangements of the arcade, but loading times are much quicker on the Saturn (sometimes by over two seconds), plus the Saturn hes a gray rock tace with the SFA2 logo etched on it. Much better than the blank 'Now Loeding' screen on the Sony machine. However, with semple quailty, the PlayStation wins with crystal clear samples; the Saturn being lumbered with slightly muffled effects end speech. But there are slightly more hit connection noises on the Sega machine...

Backgrounds look the same to me, aithough Glitch reckonad the Seturn had more leyere of parallax. Fearing I wes sinking further into the depthe of sadness ("Hey Glitch, just how many frames of animation does the elephant with the apple have?"), I'll pass over this, and instead throw my weight behind the Saturn. Sure, the PlayStation version is excellent, but the Saturn has six different costume colors, bigger characters and survivel mode. Plue, your combos are easier to puil off here. One final point: Wa could only get the 99-hit combo glitch (see last month's Hocus Pocus) against Sodom to work on the PlayStation. Bottom line: If you've only got one of the two systems, then buy that version. If you've got both mechines, they buy the Saturn version. Simple when you think about it.

Saturn-owning fens of this extremely poiished (not to mention highly merchantabie) beat-'em-up have another reason to rejoice as their system continues to churn out excellent arcade transiations (plus, the Japanese Saturn pad is simply joyous to play the game with), and this is the perfect purchase; at least until the mighty *Marvel Super Heroes* lands in our laps. You won't tind a finer 2D fighting game out there... ***CH***















R REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM

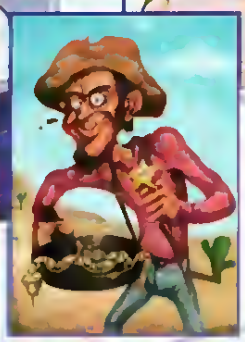
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - MODERATE

AVAILABLE - 4TH QUARTER



CHIEF HAMBLETON

SHORYUUUUKKKEEENNN!

HADO-HAOO-HAOOKEN!

REVIEW

GRID RUNNER

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - RADICAL

PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - BEGINNER - ADV.

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



GLITCH
This is clearly the best version!

Back to basics! It's been really tough, lately, for an old-school gamer like myself to find games with the kind of raw, kinetic fun, that games of the past thrived on. Sure, we've had incredible updates of *Tempest*, *Defender*, and recently *Bomberman* and *Puzzle Bros*. We're even set for the comeback classic of the year with *Robotron X*. With next-gen graphics and sound, these old-timers become classics a second time around. These games are great, but I've been looking for a brand new "classic," born and bred in 32 bit, to make its appearance. Enter *Grid Runner*, an incredibly addictive 32-bit original with gameplay straight outta the past. A new-age classic? Maybe...

Set in distant space, Grid Running is a violent sport open to only the most brutal of competitors from around the galaxy. As a Grid Runner, you are cast into an arena maze to find and seize flags. You are competing against a single opponent, one on one, who is also vying for possession of the flags. The arenas are always theme-based, so fighting Neenot, for example, would yield an plant-laden gridwork, while Hexol, the mutant insect, fights on hexagonal hive grids. Opponents are allowed to fire on each other at will with stun guns, designed to immobilize, not kill. You also have the ability to "build" by creating temporary grids that allow you to connect to other parts of the maze.

Grid Runner may feature "classic" gameplay, but it looks and sounds 100% 32-bit. The overhead scrolling levels are constructed of awesome warping polygons, reminiscent of *Loaded*. Below this detailed gridwork you'll find parallaxing clouds, bubbling lava, lush vegetation, or the incredibly trippy rotating cosmos of the bonus rounds. Every colorful background is packed with art. The music, a mix of techno-rock tracks, is also really good and fits the on screen action very well. Some of the character designs could be better, but they're all nicely rendered, animate smoothly, and each has its own CG intro. An actual hands-on play-test of *Grid Runner* reveals excellent control, fantastic level design, and play-mechanics that will have you hooked in a second (the time it takes to get the play elements dialed in).

Grid Runner is a unique game and a welcome surprise in this time of 32-bit copycats. We've all become so accustomed to, and expectant of, a certain mold of games (3D fighters, for example) that we lose track of what got us here in the first place. *GR* may appear to be less of a game because of what's immediately seen as simple and unexciting, but, the fact is, *Grid Runner* triumphs within its simplicity, offering intense play and original design. *G*



ALIEN TRILOGY

Anyone who's viewed theatrical version 1 or 2 (we won't mention 3), knows that *Aliens* was a series ripe for gamedom. It's become the only Doom like adventure to feature a female (Ripley) lead, enjoyed huge success on the Jaguar and is now selling, I'm sure quite well, nationwide. We apologize for the late review, buf Acclaim's notorious for getting us reviewables just as the game releases. As Ripley, you're sent on a wide variety of missions, requiring you to traverse an infested colony, a large prison block, and eventually the aliens' lair. This is detinitely *Trilogy*'s strong point; instead ot simply running around, trying to get out of each stage as you do in *Doom*, each level of *Trilogy* has a specitic task which must be completed. Some stages are pretty straightforward; go in and eliminate any alien infestation etc.... Others are more complex, such as finding survivors and grabbing their ID tags, or shutting off damaged systems so recovery teams can come in. This adds welcome variety to the experience, and helps break the monotony inherent in many a 3D corridor game. Each are has that distinct *Aliens* teel, motion tracker chirping... eerie silence, acidic beasts. All the destructive torce trom the movie series are here, the Pulse Rifle, Smart Gun, Flamethrower, along with the required handgun and shotgun. Combine these with secondary



Artwork by H. R. Giger, © 1989 Twentieth Century Fox, H. R. Giger








grenades, and excluding the handgun (which is FAR too weak against the aliens), you've got an arsenal that won't let you down, all you have to do is find it and of course, use it wisely.

The title *Alien Trilogy* may be a tad misleading (especially with *Die Hard Trilogy* coming soon, which does indeed cover all three movies). *Alien Trilogy* isn't 100% based on the movies; it's more along the lines of 'Inspired by *Aliens 2* and *3* with some new stuff.' On one hand, I can see why *Alien* (the first) wasn't included – there was all of ONE alien in it. But on the other, it would have been cool to go on a sort of hide-and-seek mission to find it, maybe before a timer runs out, or before it kills all of your shipmates.

If you're looking for *Alien Trilogy* to prove, once and for all, that the Saturn can do a burning *Doom*-style games, I'm not confident you'll be 100% satisfied. There's no pseudo light sourcing 'ala *Loaded*, and your surroundings tend to suffer from slight clipping. The lack of such features don't steal away *Trilogy's*

REVIEW



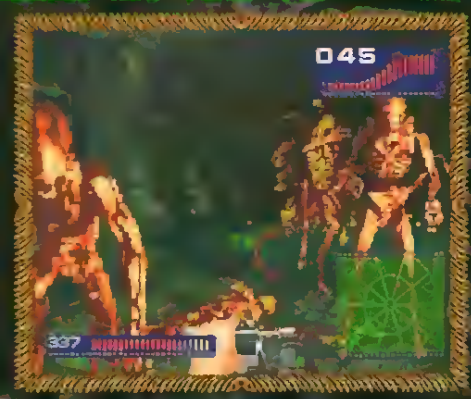
SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - PROBE
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - NOW










E. STORM
SAVE SOME DNA FOR THE RESSURECTION!

overall appeal but would have been welcome in any case. My biggest, and only real criticism lies in *Trilogy's* targeting system. Auto aiming is sorely needed but does not exist. If your enemy is on the floor or ceiling, you must manually aim higher or lower. To do so, you have to hold Z, use Y or B to look up or down, and then keep holding Z until you want to return to normal. This is a major pain, especially when a swarm of facehuggers, who scurry frantically looking for a face, are swarming you. Having to do this will drive you mad at first, and while it does get somewhat better once you're used to it, it's still annoying and can cost you precious health in the heat of battle. Otherwise *Alien Trilogy* is tinely produced. While *Alien Trilogy* doesn't "push the Saturn to new heights", it's one of the best movie to game translations currently available, is plenty long, and very challenging, both strategically and in terms of pulse pounding action. I await Alien ressurection and hopefully... 64-bit conversions. *ES*

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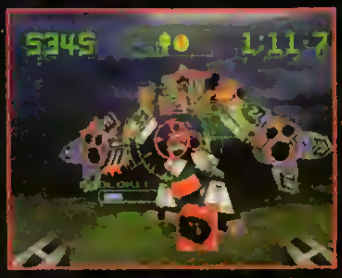
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Acclaim's *Iron Man/X-O Manowar in Heavy Metal* is the Comic book action game fans have been waiting for. Imagine! Comic book heroes NOT in a fighting game, what a novel idea! IMXO's game environment is reminiscent of *Skeleton Warriors* and *Clockwork Knight* but takes it a step further by allowing you to fire into the background, a hot feature. Although incomplete and crashing like a mutha' at press time, the game shows great promise. The rendered sprites look great at this point but a few extra frames of animation in certain areas would be greatly appreciated. The music is as to be expected... Metal, and plenty of it. This could easily become Acclaim's best Saturn action effort yet. The folks at Realtime will undoubtedly button it up tightly and deliver us a shining finished game by the close of the December GameFan. Don't miss it!

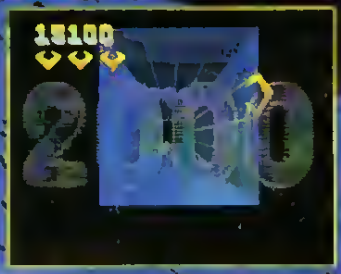






KRAZY IVAN

Yet another PlayStation hand-me-down is on the way! Yes! More scraps please! Why they take games made to take advantage of the PS hardware and stuff them into the Saturn I do not understand. Krazy Ivan without hot FMV and light sourcing is hard to imagine. Find out if they pulled it off next month.





TEMPEST 2000, one of the few truly celebrated Jaguar titles is on its way to the Saturn and PS. The Saturn version's a shell of the PS game so far but even so, it's the game we all love, overflowing with hot techno, bursting with color and more addicting than an overdose of Frappuccino. We'll review Interplay's Saturn version next month.



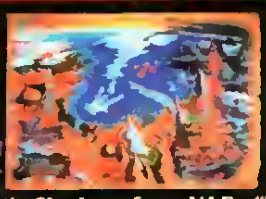












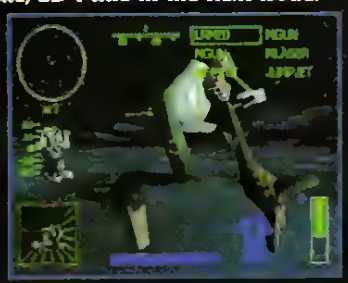


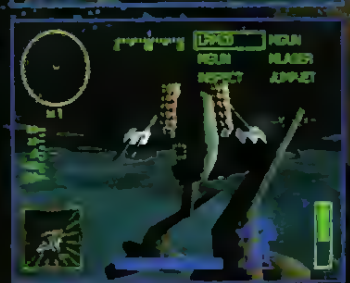
300 animators, nine months and over 70,000 hand painted animation cels. That's Shadoan from V.I.P. "The best animated Fantasy/Adventure game ever." We hope to bring you lots more on this much-touted Saturn/PS/Mac/CD-i title in the next issue.



MECHWARRIOR 2

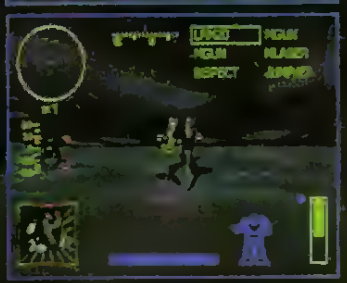
The game that would light up keyboards around the country was a no-brainer for console portage. Not only is this version upgraded but you can play it with a comfy Saturn controller in your hands. The award-winning *Jeehun* crafted the amazing musical score and Activision assures us the Saturn game won't let hard-core Mech fans down. Find out more in the December GameFan.



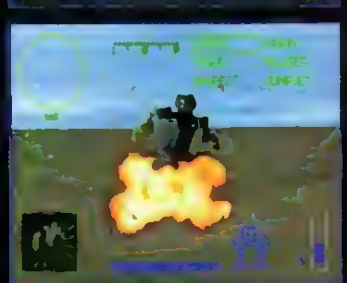
















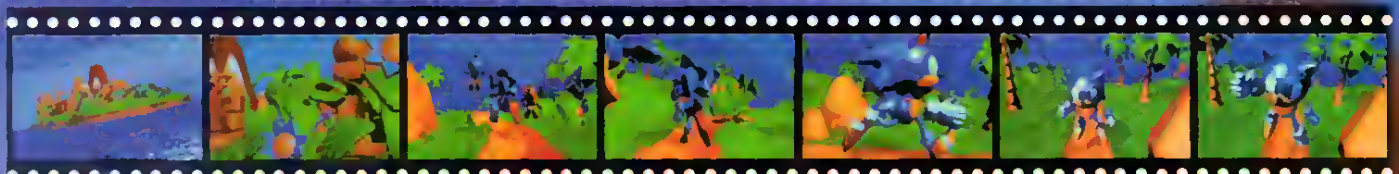


I'll never stop playing 16-bit. And here's another reason why. Feast your eyes on the newest *Sonic*, a 16-bit marvel, and then simply go get one. *Sonic Blast* is everything you love about *Sonic* in a whole new light. Rendered characters bring the game to life like never before. Travellers Tales have created the best cart-*Sonic* since the original and breathed new lite into the Genesis and Nomad.





IS THAT FMV... *ON THE GENESIS??!!* WHILE IT'S RATHER CHUNKY FMV, THE FACT THAT IT'S DN THE CART AT ALL IS ASTDUNDING. TRAVELLERS TALES HAVE MADE THIS FIRST NDN-JAPANESE *SONIC* (ACTIDN GAME) A 16-BIT EVENT. GD BUY A NOMAD FDR THIS ONE!











PREVIEW

SEGA GENESIS

DEVELOPER - TRAVELLERS TALES
PUBLISHER - SEGA
FORMAT - 32 MEG CART
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



E. STORM
I'M AMAZED ONCE AGAIN BY THE GENESIS, AND HAPPY TO SEE MY OLD FRIEND SONIC

DESPITE A CHEESY CARTOON AND NEAR MASCOT ABANDONMENT, SONIC LIVES ON!





STORY



NEW ZONES...



NEW ENEMIES..



NEW VIEWPOINT...



SAME HEDGEHOG!



VECTORMAN 2

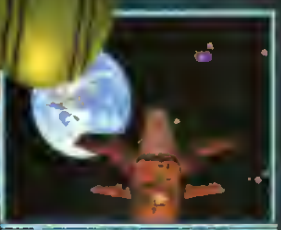




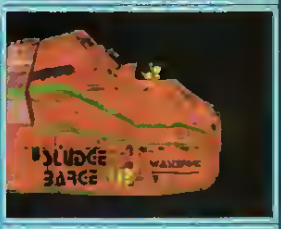


















PREVIEW

GENESIS

DEVELOPER - BLUE SKY

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - 16 MEG CART.

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



SHIDOSHI

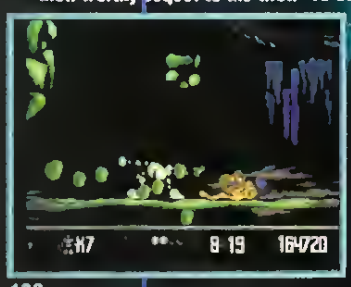
While sew Genesis gamen mey be e bit ot on oddity for the entheniest gomer (enless, ot conrse, yoe thish is the context ot the Nomed, end conider them portable games), *VM2*'n good news (acteelly it's great news) tor gnme plsyers everywhere who hoves't yet mede the migretion to 32-hit. As with eny great title, once is not enough.

As *VM2* opemn, we tind oer green mniei-iobor rohot pal back to working herd, enjoying a npin eroend the vostness of space in his trusty bergs. Unfortusstely, todsy isn't Vectormen's lecky day, ond a rocket slems into the nins of his ship, blowing it to bits end sending him hurdling toward en oiiee planet. As sech, stage one (now ceiled 'scenes,' as opposed to 'dsys') hos yoe controlling Vectormen in his doscest, collecting photons end blasting away at the hostiln lifntorms swnrming nronnd the otmosphere. From there, yee're eit to snpisre the toreigs landscape and poy a bit of sweet peybech to the ill-msnnsred nods who uned your ship as terget practice. Thnre's e nice diversity ot stoges here, such as sn insect-intested swamp, s hege materials recycling piont, e serien ot endergroend tunnels, snd evsn s chsnce to do e little robot rollerbioding. Accompanying thn tnvels are e tew bonus roseds to break op the octioe, my tovorite bning one that reminds me a great deol ot a taster-poced *Starflight*.

The originai *Vectormen* was neccessfut, in pert, becoene ot e solid geme engine, end Blee Sky gladly beltoves io the old saying, "it it ain't broke, doo't fix it." Vnctormnn still asimetes bsentifully nmooth, even better thas meny 32-bit titien yoe may hsve plsyed, esd ths classic gsmeploy in intact. There's meny en extra weapon to tind, from homing shots to e very powerful nplnning laser, ond Vectorman can once egein morph hin body Isto varionn forms. In fact, thin time he tehes on the attributes ot certain talien foen.

While it dpenn't iook like *Vectormen 2* wiil hove the same emoent ot Genesin-defying effects the tirst one contained (which conld, ot course, changn by the timn it's done), it shoeld definitely prove to be o more-thon-worthy seqeei to the tirst. 16 bit liven on! S





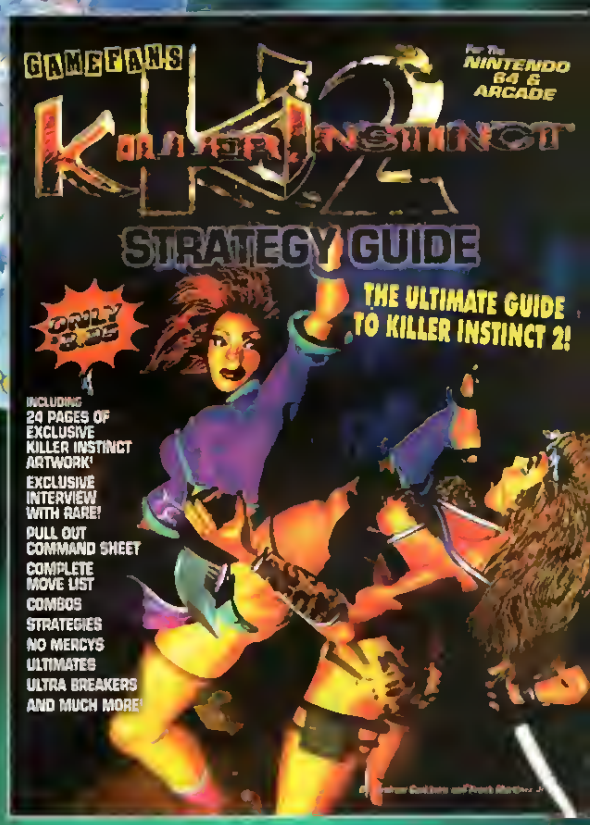




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As you can see, 16-bit is far from over. Millions of gamers still own and love their 16-bitters, including us. Right now I'm going back through *Castlevania* on both systems, as I do with different 16-bit classics monthly, and looking forward to *SF Alpha 2*, *Sonic Blast*, *DKC3*, *Vectorman 2*, and many of the games you see here. Williams is bursting with hot titles, from classics like Ms. Pac-Man to hot ports like *Ultimate MK3*. Sports is still burnin' too. So fire up the SNES, Genesis, Nomad, whatever and just play.

MS. PAC-MAN

SUPER NINTENDO

Okay, say what you will, but I am an honest fan of Ms. Pac-Man, and I ended up getting rather addicted to our Super NES preview version. It offers up four different sets of mazes (arcade, small, large, and strange), two player co-operative mode (where Mr. Pac joins the misses), and the ability to speed up Ms. Pac-Man like the converted co-op versions. This looks to be a great purchase for any Ms. Pac-Man fan, as it adds a lot of variety to the original.





ULTIMATE MK3

SUPER NINTENDO

Mortal Kombat has always been represented well on the SNES, and *UMK3* is no exception. True, it's not the arcade, but it's very impressive both graphically and audibly. Three modes of play are available (standard, 2-on-2, or an 8-player tournament), Rain and Noob are already selectable, and, of course, no load time, a definite advantage over its 32-bit cousin. I did notice that Sheeva was missing, along with a few backgrounds. But still, if you're an *MK* fan, I can't see you being disappointed.





ULTIMATE MK3

SEGA GENESIS

With each new version of *MK*, the Genesis has a harder time keeping up, but Williams has produced another quality version. The characters are amazing for Sega's 16-bit machine, control is better than on the SNES (with a 6-button pad, that is), and most important, every bit of the gameplay is there. Genesis *UMK3* has all the options the SNES has, and both contain Brutalities as well. Backgrounds, however, didn't make the transition well, but the Genesis version has more than the SNES version.

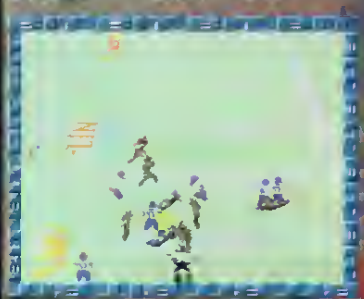




MADDEN '97

SUPER NINTENDO

First off, I'm impressed by the SNES version's attempt to replicate the theme music of the 32-bit versions. This version contains all-time records, something not present in the Genesis version, while it lacks the trading options of the Genesis version (there's always a trade-off...). The stubby little players animate really well, and the field movement is crisp. Also, the rotating field during turnovers is especially smooth. The voices, of both players and referees, are excellent and clear. If you're shopping for SNES pigskin, this is the way to go.

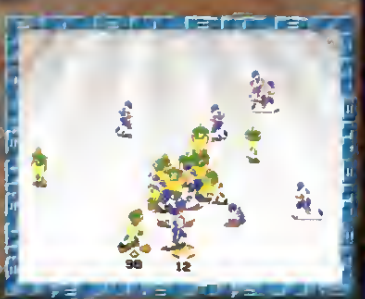




MADDEN '97

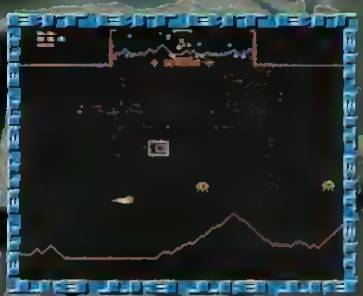
SEGA GENESIS

You'd think that developers would know the Genesis really well after 6 years. This is not the case here. Graphically, this game can't even touch *Madden '92* (the best of the series), or even last year's. Why? Thankfully, there's loads of trading options, real teams and players, and an easy interface. The actual game, despite the puny graphics, plays really well. Brand new plays are available this year, and the passing windows have been dumped in favor of a cool down-field view. Still pretty good, but big brother Saturn *Madden '97* stands proud and 32-bit.

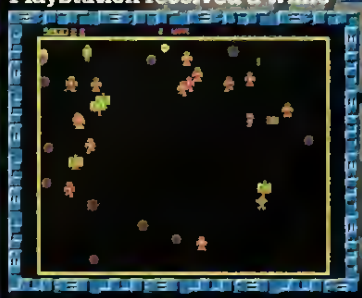




ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS — SNES



In the midst of the coming of Nintendo's 64-hit monster, a revival of titles from the heginning of video games is taking place, which indeed is a strange twist of fate. Williams will soon give Super Nintendo owners a chance to own the same collection that the PlayStation received a while back. Strangely missing is *Bubbles*, but the rest are still here, and seem to have lost nothing in the areas of graphics and sound. A nice bunch of classics, and a good way to relive the "old" days (way hack, pre-1980).



ARCADE'S GREATEST HITS — GENESIS



Ganesis owners won't he left out, aither, as Williams will he hringing out AGH for them as well. It's nica to see companies not forgetting ahout tha many 16-bit owners still ont there, and hopefully the fact that it's a classics collection is proof that there is a market for such compilations. Just like tha SNES version, the translations are dead on, and provide you with fond memories of your first experience with arcade games (or the Atari 2600, in my case).



AGH includes: *Joust*, *Defender*, *Defender II* (aka *Stargate*), *Robotron*, and *Sinistar*

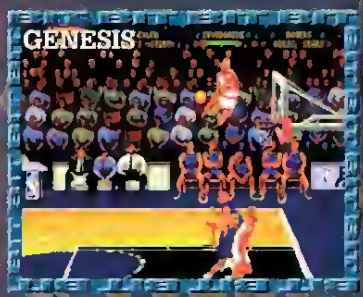
NBA LIVE '97 — SEGA GENESIS



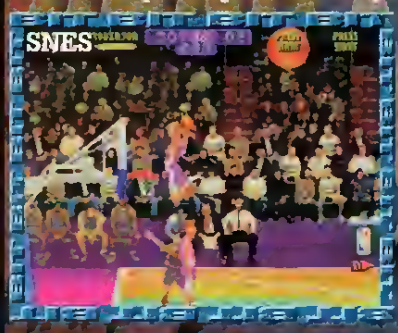
This is an excellent B-ball game in terms of its pre-game offerings. Every team and player is availabla, as well as custom teams which can be equipped with players and characteristics to suit your needs. Once I entered the game though, I realized that it really hasn't come far enough in a year. During the age of 32 and 64-bit, 16-bit has to be pretty darn good to get a gamer's ettention. The graphics engine in *NBA Live '97* is just too old, with choppy movement and screen flicker in its isometric environment. The control needs to he so much tighter, but it's manageable. A decent game, but it won't last you very long.



NBA HANGTIME — GENESIS/SUPER NES



Ah...*this* game is coming along nicely. The grephics are great by Genesis standards ond the control is super accurate. All the naw taams and faatures are in *Hangtime*, including the "Create a Player" mode. The Genesis verslon seems to be heavy on the teenage geak heads in the creation scraens for some reason. Anyway, this titla should surprise quite a faw paople with its smoothly line scrolling court and graat playar animation. The SNES version has a faw more colors here and there, hetter voice, and a completaly diffarent selection of haads in tha Craata screens, but hoth era otharwisa tha same great playing arcade jam-fast.



NHL '97 — SEGA GENESIS



One last 16-hit EA Sports hockey game! I hadn't played an *NHL* game for almost a year, in which time 32-hit sports have hasicelly teken over. I still love tha 16-hit versions though. We all know tha control, gameplay, and graphics so well by now it's not funny. This year you can trade players every which way, entar the All Star game to test your shooting and skating skills, and play the typical array of Season and Playoff games. The play mechanics are vintage parfection, and you can jem (ha!) to some hot Genesis FM renditions of popular hockey tunes (*is* there such a thing?) by gronps lika *2 Unlimited*.



侍魂 SAMURAI SHODOWN III

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SNK

PUBLISHER - SNK

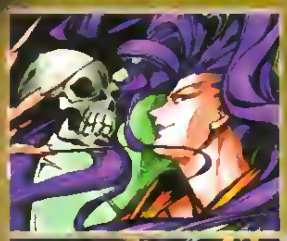
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - EASY

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



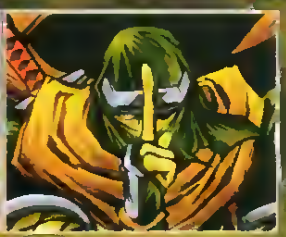












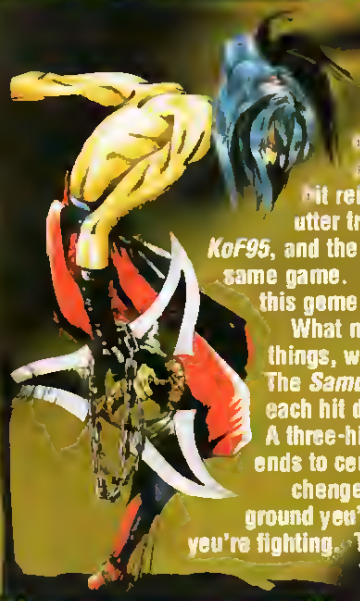






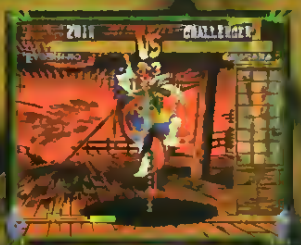






When SNK announced their return to the world of third parties, I was understandably elated. Unfortunately, I expected too much; original titles in addition to Neo ports, and perfect Neo ports at that. Of SNK's four 32-bit releases so far, two are excellent and two are utter trash. The good ones are the exact Saturn *KoF95*, and the 95% perfect PlayStation version of the same game. The trash... *Fatal Fury 3* for the Saturn and this game, *Samurai Shodown 3* for the PlayStation.

What makes this game so bad? A number of things, worst of all its mind-numbing sluggishness. The *Samurai* series is a slow collection of games, each hit drawn out dramatically, but this is a joke. A three-hit tierce slash takes upwards of three seconds to connect. Even worse, the game speed changes depending on what background you're on and what character you're fighting. The second painful trait of this game is one I have been heavily criticized on



















in past reviews. (*X-Men* Saturn! Bleo shadows! *Lunar II* rec.games.video.sega! Aaghl God flashback...) However, none can question me now: How about slashing tens of frames of walking animation to TWD? I am not kidding... two frames. Some characters walk with three, but this is a rarity. The frames have been whittled so bad it wouldn't be surprised if SNK announced they were cut by over 60%. When you really look at the game that is *SS3*, it does seem impossible to smash it into the PS' 28 Megabit of RAM: three backgrounds stored at once, as well as two insanely animated characters, all possessing with and without-weapon attacks. Therefore, the frame loss is excusable, but the slowness and choppiness is not. Look at Sunsoft's *Galaxy Fight* for the PS... perfect scaling, super-smooth gameplay, and way more parallax than *Samurai 3*. This seems like a rushed piece o' software, indeed: Gone are the gorgeous Neo CD loading screens and what I consider to be the most impressive visual trick of the Neo version: The stretching floors when you jump, giving the illusion of a 3-D floor better than *SFII*'s line-scrolling ever could. The strongest fact of all, however, is that the 3-D floor was present in the E3 version of the game.







The bottom line: Unplayable. Even the most rabid fan should go nowhere near this heinous conversion, not even for the music – you can't throw it into an audio CD player, it's streamed! If you want a real dose of good ol' SNK on the PlayStation, forget this ever existed and buy the superb *King of Fighters '95*. **NR**

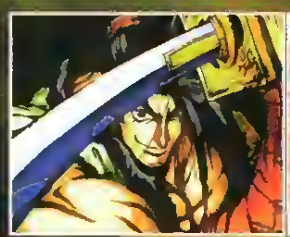
























It seems as it I've been waiting for *Albert Odyssey Gaiden* for years now. Actually, I probably have. *Albert Odyssey Gaiden* was announced tor the Super Famicom in an age when Saturn was some weird new car by GM, and when people talkad of "32-bit systems" they meant the Atari Panther and the NEC Tetsujin. Lite moved on, but mysterlously, *Albert Odyssey Gaiden*, the RPG off-shoot ot Sunsoft's popular fantasy/strategy *Albert Odyssey* series, never materialized.



And now, some 3 years later, suddenly it appears as a Saturn game. (Well, not quite "suddenly." AOG has been languishing on the Saturn release lists for nearly a year). I can't fathom why AOG never came out on the Super Famicom, but it's pretty clear that the Saturn version is an attempt for SunSoff to cut their losses by dumping the end product ot the many years of work that went into the Super Famicom version onto a Saturn CD.

Which is not to say that SunSoff hasn't spruced the game up considerably for the Saturn. The mode-7 map has been re-rendered in beautitul 32-bit color, the soundtrack is off the CD, most ot the towns and dungeons have transparent layers of parallax, the battle backgrounds are now animated, some cool new spell effects were added, as well as more trames ot battle animation than would have been possible on a cartridge. But the overall effect is still just that of a spruced-up 16-bit game, albeit one that had pretty darn good graphics for 16-bit.

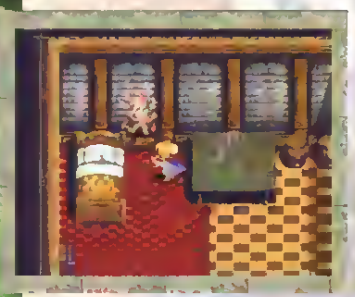




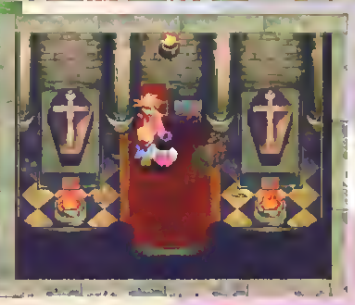


You play as Pike, a young orphaned boy who was saved from certain death by a community ot harpies (that is to say, the rare community of kind, clean, tully-clothed, attractive harpies). One day, tragedy struck, and an attack by that world's resident evil magical army left Pike's harpy foster











ODYSSEY

OF ELDEAN

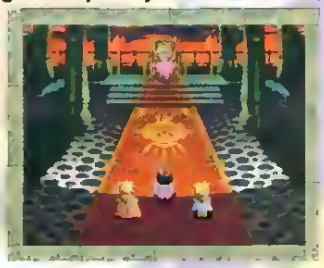


mother petrified into solid stone. Now, together with his nanny-like talking sword and a growing party of youthful companions, he's off to find a way to reverse the spell. What he doesn't know is that the evil mage behind the attack is an immortal who can only be killed by one of his own siblings... And what he also doesn't know is that his annoying talking sword happens to be that guy's sister. You can fill in the blanks from there.

A cool storyline is one thing *Albert Odyssey Gaiden* definitely has going for it... Too bad I'll never find out what happens at the end. *Albert Odyssey* is, unfortunately, one of those games that, after 5 or 10 hours of mild enjoyment, anyone without a bottomless well of patience will invariably get completely frustrated with, and never play again. Because *Albert Odyssey Gaiden* is probably the slowest paced game I've ever played.

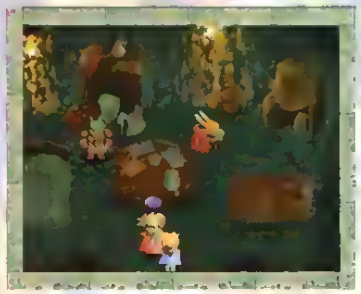


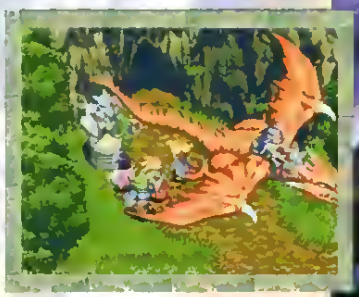
And by slow, I mean it in every sense of the word. You walk slow. The battles take forever (partially because of the excellent animation), and there are way too many of them. Worst of all, the game has horrendous loading time. Every time you get in a fight (which will be quite often), you can look forward to 6-10 seconds of staring at a black screen, pondering all of the things you'd probably rather be doing. When the battles (most of which simply require choosing "attack" over and over) end, you get another 6-10 seconds of tedium as it reloads the overworld again. It's only a matter of time before you realize that getting through whatever blandly designed dungeon you're currently lost in isn't going to be worth the hour or two of mindless repetition it would probably require to finish. And that'll be the day that AOG goes back on the shelf, where it will gather dust for generations to coma.





It's too bad, really. The Saturn could use a good RPG (or a few of 'em), and I was counting on AOG to fill that gap until *Lunar* and *Tengai Makyo Gaiden: the 4th Revelation* finally come out. But this is just another *Sword & Sorcery/Feda*-caliber disappointment. ***T***











PREVIEW

DEVELOPER - SUNSOFT

PUBLISHER - SUNSOFT

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW (JAPAN)



TAKUHI

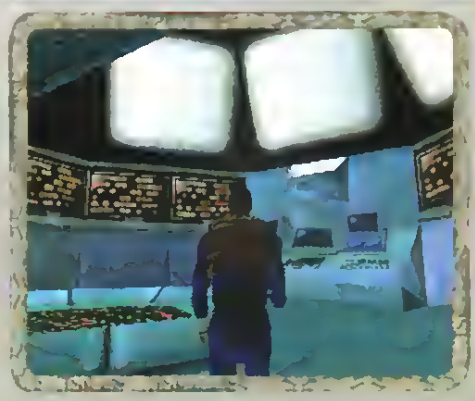








OverBlood



Resident Evil has surpassed the one million copy mark internationally, and is still a top 10 seller on both sides of the Pacific. That's an incredible achievement for a totally original game, and as everyone knew they would, the rip-offs have started coming. *Overblood* looked to be the king of the knock-offs, with a full real-time polygon engine and a storyline that could even outdo Capcom's classic. Could *Overblood* be a better *Resident Evil* than *Resident Evil*?

And the answer is: No. Actually, that answer's more like "HA! Right!" But I can acquit Riverhill on the charge of making Overblood a *Resident Evil* rip-off... Besides some similar storyline enemies, and zombies being the main enemies, *Overblood*'s only true ancestor is Riverhill's first-run 3DO title, *Dr. Hauzer*. It's basically the same engine (but totally souped up), and it seems to be the same staff.

The storyline's a big step up from *Dr. Hauzer*, though. You play as Lars, a man who just wakes up out of cold sleep with no memory of who he is, or where. When he accesses his records in the computer, it listed his length of time in cold sleep as "Eternity." As he explores the underground complex he's caught in, he finds only heavily rotted corpses, dead of a disease that turned them into zombies before killing them. Okay, that part's a little too close to a certain other game I've already mentioned too many times, but it does have one very cool twist: Lars is catching the disease too.

And the engine is amazing. *Resident Evil* just used pre-rendered bitmaps, the only polygons were on the characters... In *Overblood*, everything is polygons. You can see any area from any angle, and it moves and shifts with your movement. The settings are amazing, and Riverhill loves showing off by putting actual polygon objects in transparent glass casings, so you have windows in which you see different things when you look at them from different angles. A very impressive feat.



Unfortunately, that didn't leave too many polygons for the characters. As a result, they look pretty gumpy, and there's never more than one enemy on screen at once. Actually, to be blunt, the characters look just plain awful. It's not so much that they're blocky, it's that their move-

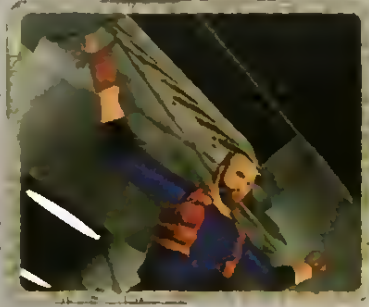








ments are completely ridiculous. I don't know how quite to describe it... It's like they motion-captured an effeminate orangutan or something.



When the characters jump, or run, or even walk, their movements are oafish and ridiculously exaggerated. Here's my theory: Before Lars was put into cold sleep, he ran around in public parks working as a really sucky mime. This also explains why he'd be given the cold sleep equivalent of a death sentence. Exterminating that entire element of society is going to be key for us to progress as a race.

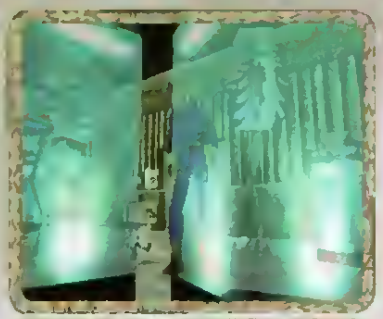
Lars isn't alone in *Overblood*, as he first befriends a robot named Pipo, and then finds Milly, another amnesiac disease survivor. One of the game's more inspired innovations is the ability, at times, to split up the characters and have one stay behind while the other goes ahead, effectively working in concert.

Overblood sounds like it should be a good game, but, strangely, it isn't. The excellently rendered atmosphere is ruined by the game's awful camera angles, always twitching and switching at inappropriate and confusing spots, and the extreme amounts of polygon break-up in later areas. Clearly, *Overblood* could have used a lot of tweaking.

There are a lot of other problems with *Overblood*, too. The fights completely suck. Though few and far between, they're riddled with bad control (you just stand there and punch) and messed-up camera angles. The music is from Japanese TV drama hell, ambient but somehow annoying and repetitive. And the game is pretty much totally linear, with many intermissions, yet few memorable events.

Overblood will amuse you while it lasts, and its engine is definitely technically impressive. But despite how good it must have looked on paper, *Overblood* ends up not being worth the trouble.

T



REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - RIVERHILL

PUBLISHER - RIVERHILL

FORMAT - CD

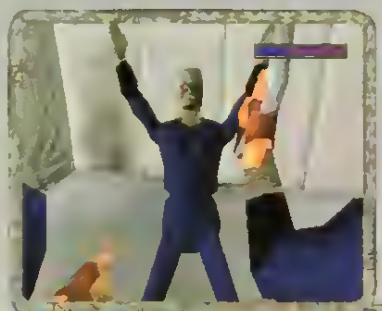
OF PLAYERS - 1

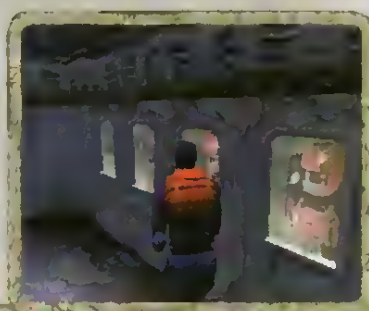
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



THE VENDING MACHINES OF THE FUTURE: VEGETABLES, CUSTARD, AND SALT. MMM.













FIGHTING VIPERS





After many happy hours spent with the Japanese final of *Fighting Vipers*, I must say that I am stunned yet again by AM2's Saturn-coding prowess. The game is much improved over the version previewed last month, and even that was pretty impressive. But what impressed me even more than the quality of the conversion was how much the opportunity to play *Fighting Vipers* without some sweaty egomaniac arcade bottom-dweller breathing over my shoulder has given me a new appreciation for the quality of the game itself.

Now that I've had a lot more experience with *Fighting Vipers*, I'm really hard-pressed to find any fundamental problems with the game's play mechanics. First time I played it, I couldn't even stand the characters, but now I've even grown to appreciate them. Now I understand that they're actually retarded and '80s in a cool, loveable kind of way (well, Sanman still nauseates me). Like in all fighting games, there are some incredibly cheesy moves and tactics, but even those are mostly fixed by the arranged mode. *Fighting Vipers* is just a great game: it feels good, it looks good, it sounds good, it plays well, and it even has plenty of balance. Most of all, though, is the way the whole experience comes together; the fusion of the perfectly crunchy sound effects, quick, decisive character movements, grinding techno, awesome camera angles and 60 fps play control leave a satisfying taste in your mouth that puts other fighters to shame.















AM2 didn't just plunk the *FV* characters into the *Virtua Fighter 2* engine to make this one, they actually took a very different approach. The game is in Saturn's normal resolution, not *VF2*'s juicy hi-res mode (which is why it doesn't look so good in shots), but the Gouraud-shaded characters move so effectively that you won't care about the lack of resolution. This tactic left AM2 plenty of room to put in the different walls that border each side of the ring, and the shrapnel that results from an armor break. There were some sacrifices, of course, as the characters look pretty lame when the camera zooms up on their faces during their win poses.

Also notable in this translation is the quality of the ring itself: the floor is clear and sharp, not a pixelly mess like it was in *VF2* (and just about every other 3D fighter, for that matter). The sound effects and voices are equally improved: very clear and crisp. The only major loss from the arcade is in the backgrounds. They still look good, but the planes in Tokio's stage are grounded, the shadows in

All images © 1995, 1996, AM2, Sega. All screen shots taken from Japanese version. US version subject to change.











Honey's are non-existent, and the helicopter in Mahler's stage... well... I pleaded for Sega to put it back in last issue, and now I realize that that was a horrible mistake. That cardboard-cutout 2D helicopter looks ridiculous; I half expect to see someone's hand holding it up with a popsicle stick.

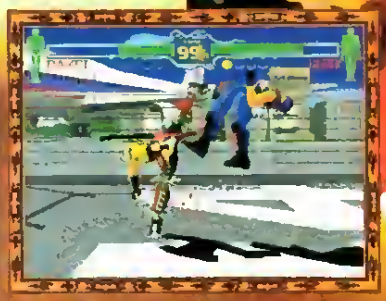
Sega nicely followed Namco's lead in their *Tekken 2* translation by filling this version with tons of original Saturn options. You can play as the boss, plus 2 hidden characters, two hidden costumes (for Honey/Candy), and a special "Kids" mode (a la VF Kids). The hidden Pepsiman character is especially cool... At first I was a bit uncomfortable about Sega selling out like this, but Pepsiman, with his exaggerate win poses, his special ability to "quench one's thirst," and his campy theme song, fits right in. The way he appears is beyond awesome: It only happens when you're playing against the computer and are about to lose (and lose badly). Suddenly: "Challenger comes." The game goes back to the character select screen, and the phantom 2P cursor slowly scrolls through the characters. Just when he runs out of characters to choose, a chorus sings "Pepsimaaaaannnn!" and you're saved from a shameful defeat by the cool, refreshing taste of Pepsi!

And hey, the goodies don't stop there. There are three different settings for the arcade mode: Original, Arranged, and Hyper. Arranged mode fixes a lot of inequities in the game by tweaking the damage of cheesy moves, making certain moves (like jump attacks when your opponent is down) harder to use, and tossing each character a couple of new moves. Hyper mode is the same as Arranged, but when you break off your armor (which is now a simple Back + Punch + Kick motion), you're in hyper mode for the rest of the round, and move nearly twice as fast. Your moves don't do much damage, and you're very weak to attack, but you can do crazy chains and juggling combos.

I'm way over my word count here, so I'll cut right to the chase: this is a great game, and you must buy it. We're reviewing this as an import title for now because of the fear that Sega might censor the armor break moves and delete Pepsiman, so you'll have to stay tuned next month to find out about that. But no matter what SOA does, it's a safe bet that the final version is going to be *the* arcade translation this Christmas. *T*

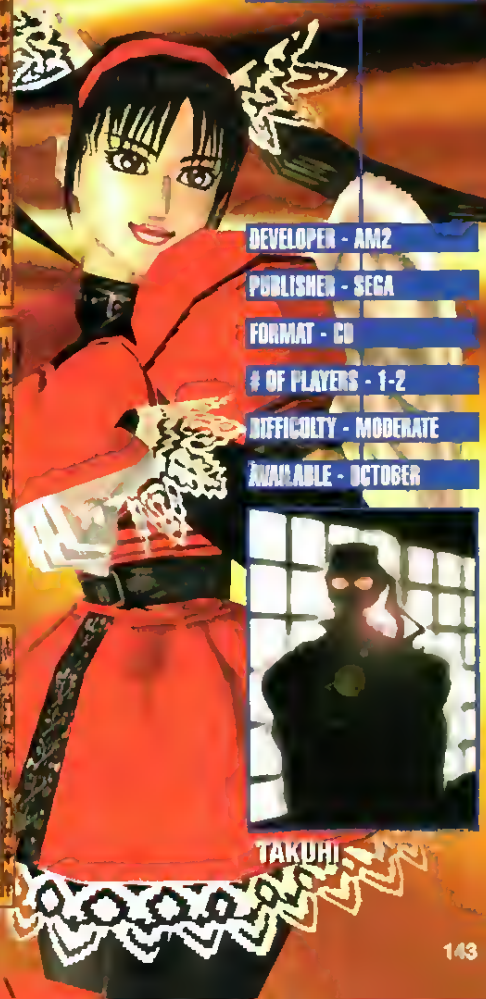








R REVIEW



DEVELOPER - AM2

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

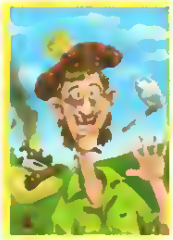
OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - MODERATE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

TAKUHI

GAMEFAN SPORTS



Chip



Jacques Strap

CHIP'S CORNER

Yeah, I saw the whole thing. The beast cometh, charging, fierce. Intention: Send one head into one... orbit. Seldon, big, bad, ready... scared! *Wife, uh, kids, uh... FIVE MILLION DOLLARS! Which way to the canvas?* A grazing blow that wouldn't have knocked my girlfriend down... face plant! *Crowd, booing... Not convincing enough. I'll wait for one that'll look good on camera. Oooh here it comes, DIVE, DIVE! Wha.. it didn't hit me, FIVE MILLION DOLLARS. Stay down, go home. Count money.* Fact: there's no one left for Mike. Evander, you're a cool cat. Don't do it!! Mike should be fighting like, bears and rhinos, or three guys at a time or something. This is the greatest fighter there's ever been. Mike's like a wind up toy, crank spun to maximum tension. I don't care what your strategy is, Mike's goin' through it; *at* you. You can't run. He'll catch you. Capcom should make the game, should it ever happen. The heavyweight division however, is now a one man show.

VIEWPOINT

"STRAP"

As my first taste of N64 sports, I can only imagine what the future holds. *Gretzky* will appeal to fans of *NBA Jam* and *Open Ice* almost instantly, with too-fun play that picks up right away and holds you there for hours on end. I love the speed bursts, flaming puchs, and brutal hits. The fully 3D rendered rink is 64-bit perfection.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	10	8	9	92



Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey
Nintendo 64
Williams

"CHIP"

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey is an easy game to describe... It's hot arcade style hockey! The N64 is going to be a phenomenal sports machine. Although stats may suffer (they eat up valuable cart space) seeing the players up close with no pixellization has been long in coming. The analog pad takes some getting used to, but full 360-degree movement is worth your time. I won't call this the ultimate hockey game so it's only the first but I will highly recommend it!

G	C	P	M	O	
8	9	7	5	7	90

The awesome presentation is only half the goods. The actual game plays so well, with so much consistency, that all other football games up to this point can only bow and acknowledge *Madden*'s superiority. Ultra-smooth graphics, perfect sounds, and the best play-mechanics ever... here's your champion.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	10	8	na	98



Madden '97
SATURN
Electronic Arts

It had to happen sooner or later, and it has EA's back on top with their latest in the *Madden* series. Madden '97 for either platform is the season in your living room. Remember the ease of execution from the Genesis days? Well, it's back but with graphics from above, supreme multi-player games, 8 cameras and comedic commentary from the man on the train. See it, buy it, play it, love it!

G	C	P	M	O	
9	10	10	9	na	95

3D Baseball isn't the most spectacular herdball I've seen this year, but it is one of the most playable. I had a great time with the basic play mechanics and solid control, despite the fairly basic visuel presentation. The full MLBPA support is always nice to see, and the season options are a required plus.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	8	8	7	na	81



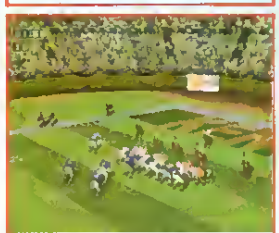
3D Baseball
PlayStation
Crystal Dynamics

Crystal has delivered as promised a hot polygonal game of baseball. As the season winds to an end here's a reason to stay in the game. An easy (but not lame) control scheme along with effective cameras, smooth fielding and clean CG highlights greet you at the door and never took back. The game balance is also user friendly. Pitching first need not cause a panic.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	9	8	5	na	80

Besides the great 3D and powerful unlimited perspective camera system, *GameBreaker* is a fantastic package of college football options and plays. The play control is right on, with a superb feel for running and passing plays, and the comprehensive 400+plays list is a joy to use. The little bonuses, like college bands playing marching tunes and personalized stadiums round out one of this year's most impressive football games.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	9	9	9	na	93



NCAA GameBreaker
PlayStation
Sony

If you want more stats and realistic college football action, buy a ticket. With 400 plays at your disposal, unlimited cameras and smooth responsive running, passing and defensive gameplay, well, you can't ask for a whole lot more. But there is more. Sony's *GameDay* engine is at work here, and we all know what that means. Try to imagine that godly game with more depth and crazy college plays. It's a hummer!

G	C	P	M	O	
9	8	9	7	na	90

GameFan Sports Preview

TECMO SUPER BOWL

The football game that started it all is back and ready to do some serious business. *Tecmo Super Bowl* looks absolutely fantastic. As good as it is, can it actually get better? Nearly every 32-bit football game we review is a gem. It's confusing, you know? *Tecmo Super Bowl*, however, is the first great looking conventional FB game, which makes it a prime candidate to really stick out. It almost looks like your watching TV. Scary. We'll have a full report on Tecmo's first 32-bit series addition next month.



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PlayStation™

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WAYNE GRETZKY'S 3D HOCKEY



JUST A FEW OF THE CAMERA ANGLES...

REVIEW

NINTENDO64

DEVELOPER - ATARI GAMES
PUBLISHER - WILLIAMS
FORMAT - 64 MEG CART
OF PLAYERS - 1-4
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - OCTOBER

If you enjoyed Midway's *Open Ice* coin-op, *Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey* should be right up your hip-checkin' alley. Get ready for wild hits, spaud bursts, flamiag pucks, and fiendishly addictive multiplayer action. As a die-hard sports fan hailing from the north, I've played hockey (you know... with Wayne and Gurth), buuu lo countless games, and spent countless hours playing each aud every console gema. Now that I've qualified mysail... oe with the review!

What sets *Gretzky* apart from tha rest of the pack is tha total arcada feal. Sura, you can set it on Simulatioa, whare injuries ara taken into account (as well as penalties), but I get tha impressioa *Gretzky* was aever designed to cater to simulation taus. Ouce you whut your palata with a lull-blowa gama lo the Arcade moda, Simulatioa will ba tha furthast thiug from your mind. Personally, I wouldn't have it any othar way. It caa satiata my sim cravings with countless othar hockey games. *Gretzky* offers a parfuct *NBA Jam*-oe-ice feal thut keaps you coming back for more.

Load up thu gema (or should I say *turn on* the game...cartridga powarl) aud after a digitized static ot good ol' number 99, you'll be offered maay wull-deflaad optioas. If you're playiug agulust a buddy, do yoursalt a favor aad pump up tha difficulty caasa oa aasy your goaltenders are brainless wimps. Othar thau difficulty, yoe cae tinker with time, coelrol schematics, aad u souud test. *Gretzky* supports up to 5-oa-5 player gamas, using any combinatioa ol real players or CPU, and offers three NHL superstars from every NHL taam (*Opan Ice*, uayoee?). If you stert up a multiplayer co-op game (uasily doaa with those four baautiful controller ports), yoe get to play with your owu parsoaal superstar for tha antire game — a graat way to practice with yoer favorite playars.

Aftar a little promaaade through tha ao-nonsense optioas, it's time to hit tha riuk and sheerb the maoe ot N64 perks thal





JACQUES STRAP
WHEE, LOOKIT ME!
A CANUCK WIT' A PUCK!









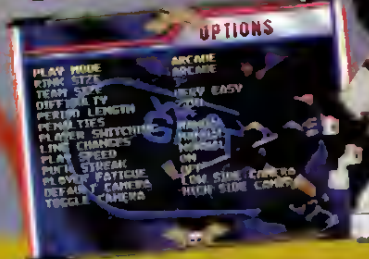
















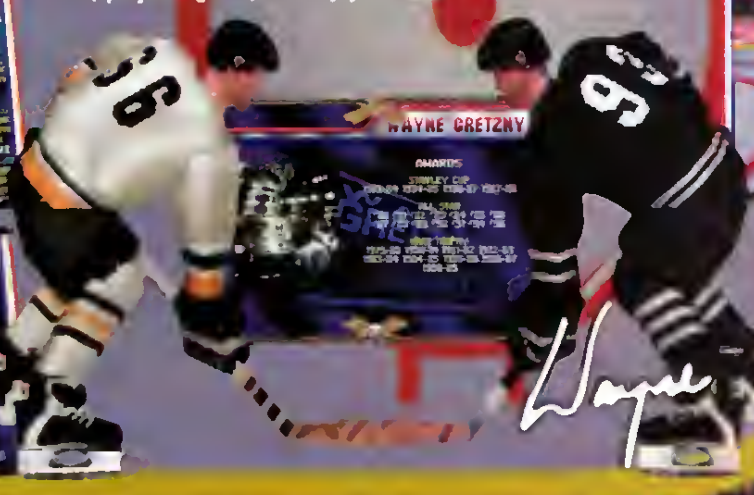




Gretzky has to offer. First, the camera is never busy, panning to and fro with the greatest of ease while the texture-mapped rink gracefully swirls through its 60fps paces. And whether it's the boards, the rink, or the players, you've just entered the world of mip-mapped anti-aliasing where close-ups inspire smiles, not moans of dismay. Check out the close-up of the toothless wonder on the facing page for a fine (but ugly!) example of the N64's graphical prowess. Player animation is a silk-spun joy to behold and includes several well-implemented (and often brutal) extra touches to power checks and speed boosts. One simply can't find complaint because, frankly, we've never seen it this good. Conversely, we have *heard* it this good, if not better, but the N64 still shows it can play loud, clear samples of rowdy crowds in this case).

While it's easy to use traditional tactics in *Gretzky*, like cross-rink one timers, goals are scored quickly and strategies will soon disappear into the chaos. The inclusion of charge-up slapshots (complete with flaming trails), blue-streak speed boosts, and goalies who erect little brick walls in emergencies, once again highlights the arcade-style humor of *Gretzky*. Coupled with brutal hits and speed checks that send the enemy sprawling across the ice, *Gretzky* will keep you grinning as your hands frantically work the controls. Speaking of which, the controls are simple and effective – even offering total analog control during play and 360° power over replays.

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey is one hot title. To finally see an *NBA Jam/Open Ice* brand of game, represented entirely by texture-mapped polygons, will be a great relief to those tired of seeing poorly animated digitized characters in one perspective. If arcade sports are your cup o' tea, bless your shiny new N64 with this solid, playable game, and enjoy.



GAMEFAN SPORTS

REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - TIBURON ENT.

PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

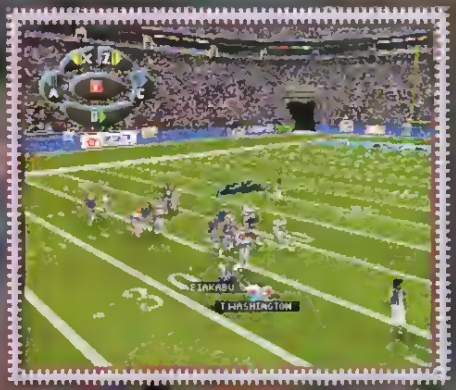
AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



JACQUES STRAP







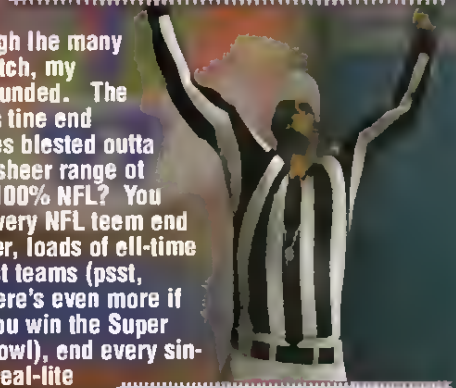
Life is good! I'm looking at both *Madden '97* finals! Last month, the GF Sports team stayed up late with our alpha versions, so you can imagine the reaction to a couple of "final code" *Madden* disks sliding through the doors. As I've mentioned before, EA had experienced some problems with *Madden '97*, on one occasion scrapping the whole project and starting from scratch. As these fantastic versions are about to hit the street though, I'm happy to say that *all is forgiven.*

This year's installment of *Madden* takes its typical cross-platform trip, yielding the inevitable comparisons we've all come to expect. Much as the Genesis and SNES *Maddens* of the past raised questions regarding hardware strengths and weaknesses, so to do the Saturn and PlayStation versions. First, though, I'll tackle the play mechanics, an aspect of *Madden '97* which goes virtually unchanged between systems.

I'm looking at one of the most complete and user-friendly football packages in the history of sport games. For starters, the help menu is truly a gift from pigskin heaven. At virtually any point in the game, you may click on the menu to be given a full explanation of any set of options, controls, or play settings currently running on screen. This includes information about any command – even telling you what controller buttons to press while accessing or closing menus.

After watching a first time *Madden* player (where ya been?!) swiftly make his way through the many options without a hitch, my beliefs were well founded. The ease of execution is fine and dandy, yes, but I was blasted outta my seat by the sheer range of options. 100% NFL? You bet. Every NFL team and player, loads of all-time best teams (psst, there's even more if you win the Super Bowl), and every single real-life team stadium in the league. Throw in an eight player multi-player mode, every weather condition under (or not under!) the sun, full record keeping, and I am one happy sports freak. I play football games more than any other sport, and I'm tellin' you I was slammin' with *Madden '97* before I even stepped on the field.

After hitting the field, the joy continues. As the camera sweeps across the textured polygon stadium for the coin toss, you get the feeling you're about to play something special. The players look fantastic, built and composed like real players should be. The crowd wails clear and loud and makes its approval known. Looking up to the perfect picture-in-picture CG

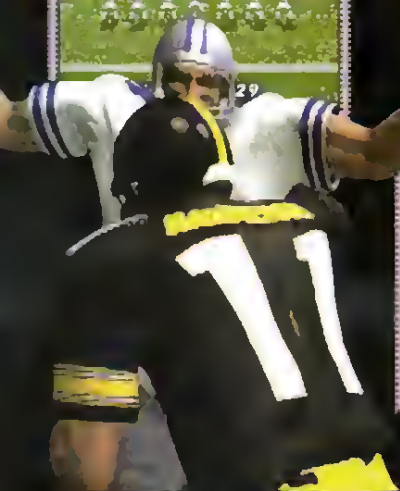






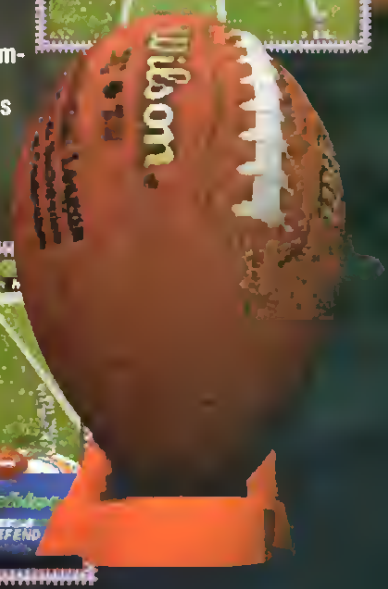








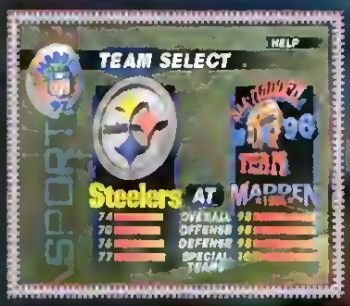












square, the coin drops in. The camera pans and the entire field scrolls into view, fast and smooth. The players line up; the crowd explodes with an anxiousness you can almost *feel*. The classic kick meter peaks, and as the ball sails towards the receivers, the realization slams into you like a Junior Seau sack: This is the *Madden* we all remember. The cool plays, the perfect control, the end zone showboating, and Madden quotes that you gotta laugh at ("Hit 'em in the back of the head, they blow snot bubbles!"). The passing windows have graduated to 32-bit, with a full down-field view of your receivers, clear and fair, so that any passing error can only be the fault of the player. The running is much more realistic now – you won't be dashing for 50+ yards by just spinning off tacklers. The player animation (runs, passes, tackles, etc.) is superb, packed with little extra touches that make plays exciting and memorable. Finally, witness the end-zone dances and prepare to be amazed. They are smooth beyond belief, include the most recent of jigs (back-flips, toe drags, crowd calls, etc.) and humiliate your friends convincingly in multi-player games.





So, returning to the point of cross-platform comparisons, I no longer feel it's necessary to go there with *Madden '97*. On both the PlayStation and Saturn, this game is a resounding success. O.K., maybe the PS version has cleaner FMV and better 3D stadium movement. Maybe the Saturn has better sound, and better 3D field movement. Neither are leaps ahead of the other for any of these points so digging for comparisons is pointless. *Madden '97*, on either system, will be remembered for its greatness. EA Sports is back in a huge way. With so much development time, so many refinements, and with so much hinging on this new *Madden* release, they let nothing slip by. *'97* is easily the best *Madden* ever, and currently the best football game available.

JS

GAMEFAN SPORTS

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - TIBURON ENT.

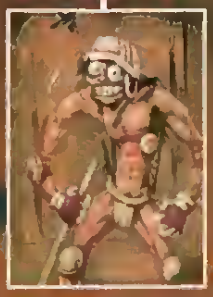
PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

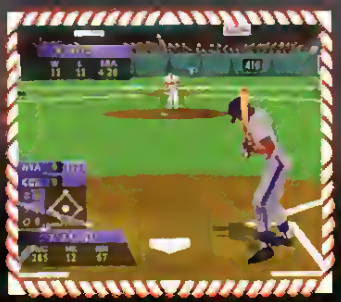
AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER



JACQUES STRAP
Snot Bubbles?!

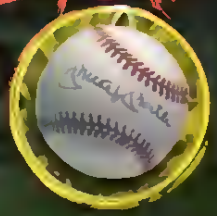






GAMEFAN SPORTS



REVIEW

3D BASEBALL




SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CRYSTAL DYN.
PUBLISHER - CRYSTAL DYN.
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

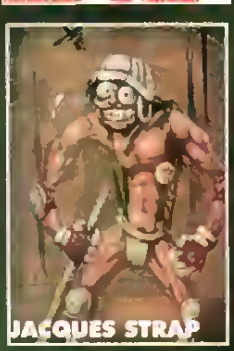
The regular season is almost over. '96 has been a good year tor baseball (comparatively speaking), and I can't wait to see the battles tor the divisions and championship this tall. The year's early season flood, and year-end explosion ot baseball games has yielded some very impressive titles. As the bombshell ot Sega's *World Series 2* touches down, Crystal Dynamics sneaks in with *3D Baseball*, their big sports release tor '96.

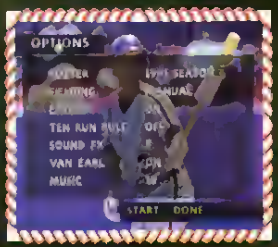
As I've mentioned in past previews, *3D Baseball* contains all ot the players tn the Majors thanks to a tull MLBPA license. I teel like I've said this a million times betore, but once again expect to see all your tavorite players and their digitized mugs popping up during games. All the important stats are included, with progressive stat tracking for season play. There are no major league teams in *3D Baseball*, everything olse *is* here, but no actual teams. Ain't licensing strango? How do you get the playors and not the teams? Dh well. On with the review.



3D Baseball isn't *everything* it was hyped to be, but it comes close. It's a very, very tun title. It you remember, earlier this year, Crystal Dynamics was busy touting their 3D engine, "real motion control," and although I expected something truly revolutionary I am not disappointed. You'll be hard-pressod to tind bettor player animation in any baseball game. Whether it's the real-lito nuances incorporated into tho batter's moves, the silk-spun tluidity ot the pitcher, or the throws and tags ot the tielders, the animation in *3D Baseball* is hot. The great animation doesn't trip up the control either, which is dead on and easy to get accustomed to. Unlike Konami's *Bottom of the 9th*, Crystal isn't trying to throw you off with wacky new play mechanics (like aiming a cursor to hit the ball... I still think it's weird, O.K.?). Instead, we have the tried-and-true gameplay we're all used to: swing, pitch, runs, steals, dives, traps and jumps

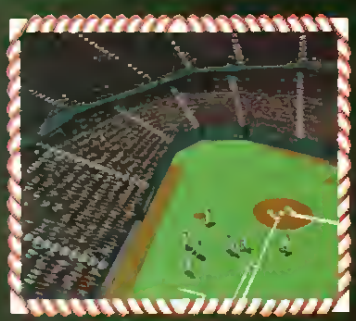










in tho outfield (with the kind ot control we're all used to). Tho 3D scrolling ot the tlold is good, and the stadium pans and zooms with only the slightest ot break up, close-up. Van Earl is perhaps the tinest commentator ever in a baseball video game, with excellent pronunciation ot playor names and very good play calling. Although the overall sound quality during a game isn't up to par with, let's say, *Bottom of the 9th*, the character ot Van Earl's voice-ovor adds greatly to the teel ot the game.

While *3DBB* might not claim the overall diamond ball crown this year, rest assured that it's an incredibly tun game with just the right touches spread about evenly. Whilo others might criticize *3D Baseball* tor tairly tame graphics, and perhaps the lack ot the MLB license, I've truly onjoyed this baseball game and would recommend it to any tan.

The one notable shortcoming is the poor selection ot stadiums. These tour ballparks, complete with tictitious namos like the "Crystal Yards," aren't really good enough to till the void ot 22 missing parks. But luckily, *3D Basoball* is saved by the ease ot execution in its menus and play set-up screens, which are simple yet tlawless. Companies are tinally getting wise to the tact that players want their sports games to be meaty, but without complex options to slow 'om down. ***JS***



SOCCER SO AUTHENTIC WE SHOULD PROBABLY CALL IT FOOTBALL.



The most realistic graphics and gameplay of any sports game ever.
Sega Worldwide Soccer '97.
Forty-eight national teams from around the globe.
Cup tournaments, shoot-outs, and exhibition matches.
Create-a-player and weather options.
Headers, back-heel passes, banana and bicycle kicks.
Killer slide tackles, and plenty of refs to yellow card ya.

SEGA SPORTS



SEGA SATURN

1 to 2 player game unless used with 6player adapter

Sega Genesis, Sega Saturn, Sega Worldwide Soccer '97 and Sega Sp



REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SONY INTERACTIVE

PUBLISHER - SCEE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



JACQUES STRAP











This year's most in depth tootball game is here. Sony's *NCAA GameBreaker* is a gnet package, ioadnd with options, tantastic pleys, and devastating realism. Not only have the dosigners maintained tho qeaiity 3D nnginn and gameplay ot their tirst game, *GameDay*, bet they've gone tnrther by compliing countless historicaiiy accnrata Coliego tootball tnatnres.

I'ii give you a qnick rnn-down ot the major options: Aii 111 coliege tnams, stadinms, and rnai-iita coliego unitorms ore hern. Compiotn statistical tracking ot over a dozen offensive and dnfnnsivo cotegories can be viewnd and saved. There's oxhibitlon, season (with or without bowi gamos), playoff tournaments, and nationai championship modns. Citrns, Gator, and Rosn Bowl games are represontod, as wnil as Trophies iike the Jim Thorpe and Heisman. There's tonr ditticnity iovels, game speed adjustments (set on Very Fast, the game rocknts throngh plays at amozing spends), and snow, wind, or rain gamo weather options. Basicoily, Sony has coliege tootball coverod compintnly.

O.K., so yon got thn pictnre – options GALORE! Let's hit the tieid, ond take thn gamnplay apart. Choose trom cnstom Offnnsivn and Dotensive tormations iikn thn "Fnii Honse," "Fiexboae" and the "4-4," from over 400 total plays. Yoer ottnasivn running and passing game offers spins, hordies, stiff arms, and diving catches. These movns are accnrate down to the pixet so if yoo shakn two defendnrs with a spin, bnt siow np, expect to be hanind dowa morciiessiy by the third and fourth. it yoe happen to

NCAA GameBreaker











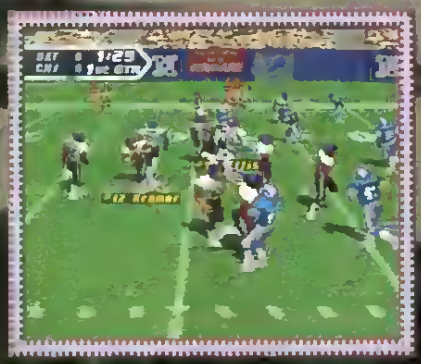




ead a play by running ont ot boends, individeais in yonr way (iikn those treaky press hoends) wiii actuaiiy be ieveiind, jnst iikn thn rnai thing. Othnr cooi animations, tikn tornarm shivnrs, shonstring tackies, and ovar-end pownr hits, hnip to convny thn hrutai nature ot tootbaii.

When i had possession, i was esing the handy nniimitnd perspective Comera system to got the ideai view when attempting tongh running ond passing ploys. Similarly, on detense, this greot camnra system was perfect tor covnring tongh 2nd down passing situations. I coeid spot thn rnceivors rnning thoir rontns, and (hopetully) intnrcnpt thnm. Thn compntnr Ai is tongh, though, on any setting, snrprising me with its qnick learning and dogged determination (thn CPU, tor onco, wiii try to sneak by 4th-down pnnt takos and 2 point convorsions). Evory componnnt ot thn on-tinid action is pnrfnct, with pinpoint play control, oxcelient animation, nsor-friendly play-caiiing, and effortiess camera angies.

GameBreaker's texture-mapped polygonal engine is fast and efficient, rendoring the 3D stadiums smoothly with iittie break-up. The edded toech ot having 12 real college tighting scores, orchostrated by the actnal schooi bands, makns onn roaiize how historicaiiy corroct this game actnaiiy is. *NCAA GameBreaker* is the most dodicatod and ontertaining coiiege tootbaii game evor. *Madden '97* may retain the overaii pigskin crown, bnt in tnrms ot coiiogn-basnd tootbaii games, yon'ii tind nono bnttnr than *NCAA GameBreaker*. *JS*





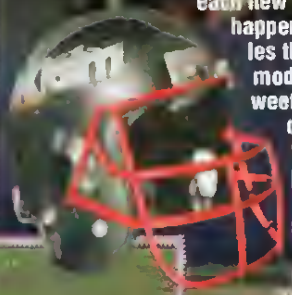
NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB 97



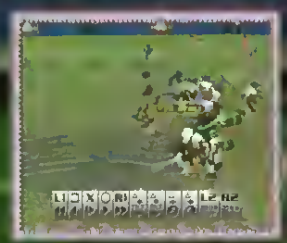


Last issue I reviewed the Saturn version of *QBC'97*, but the PS version didn't quite make it in time. I realize the game should be on store shelves by the time you read this, so consider this PS review to be a guideline for purchase ('cause if you're buying a football game, you have many choices this year).

Let me bypass the idiosyncrasies of system comparisons, and tell you that the PS version has the superior 3D scrolling (and, obviously, cleaner FMV). Otherwise, Saturn and PlayStation owners won't have a thing to brag about, 'cause it's the same game (one heck of a game, in fact). Iguana always does their homework when crafting a *QBC* game. Have no fear – official teams, logos, jerseys (complete with real-life numbers), and players are here. The Jaguars, Panthers, Ravens, and new Rams, are included with up-to-the-minute rosters. We actually saw the game go through statistical and player changes between each new rev, as off-season trades and roster changes happened in real-life! Talk about details! *QBC'97* tackles the options with Exhibition, Playoff, and Season modes, player trading, and the basic goodies like weather, stadium, and player selection. I'm a little disappointed that a mere four stadiums are selectable, but the addition of home team banners and paint make it almost un-noticeable.



The PS version supports up to 8 players simultaneously (four less than the Saturn's), and has no trouble handling the gridiron bedlam of multiplayer games.



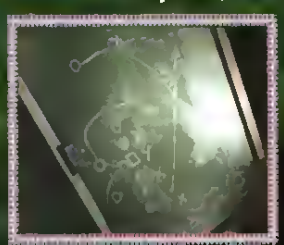


The graphics in *QBC'97* are inspired to say the least. Speaking of graphics, last month I remarked there were no noticeable improvements made for '97. After going back to '96's *QBC* and actually comparing, however, I feel like a total bonehead. '97's graphics are much improved. You're sure to find a smoothly scrolling perspective with the virtually unlimited Cam system, and the pans during kick-offs are a slick piece of work. The players are traditional sprites with great animation... I especially like the little touches like shoestring tackles and realistic scoops to recover balls after hard tackles. I get the impression these designers are either football fanatics or did extensive research. Either way, the end result is realistic gameplay that you'll not tire of watching again and again. *Quarterback Club '97* is among the top three PS football games this year. *Madden* is still the king in my book with *QBC'97* a close second, and *GameBreaker* third. The new NFL *GameDay* should be showing up soon, as well as Sega's new football... My, my, we're being treated well this year! This is an excellent game in any case, and I highly recommend it. ***JS***













GAMEFAN SPORTS

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - IGUANA

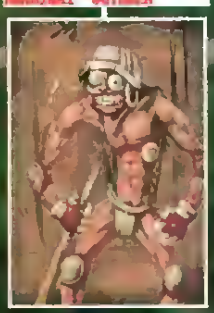
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - OCTOBER



JACQUES STRAP
SACK ME! C'MON, TAKE YER BEST SHOT! HUT! HUT! HUT!

GAMEFAN SPORTS

NHL 97

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ELECTRONIC ARTS

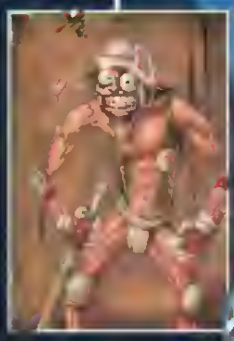
PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-4

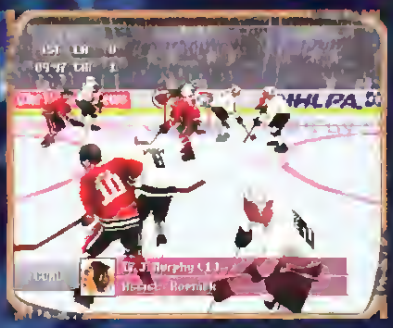
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



JACQUES STRAP LET THE HOCKEY BEGIN!







EA has already managed to re-define 32-bit sports with their excellent PS and Saturn versions of *Madden '97*, so I have high hopes for this, their first hockey venture onto the next gen consoles.

Beginning with the Play Modes, EA has included Exhibition, Season, Shootout, and Playoff choices. The Season mode naturally offers memory card use to save all of the team and league stats as you fight your way to Lord Stanley's prize. Other season options include the ability to monitor player stats, simulate a game (once chosen, it will simply go back to the Season screen, acting as if the game had been played), and enter the Transactions mode. This Transaction mode allows you to trade players, release and/or sign players and free agents, and Create Players. Give your ice skatin' mauler a name, jersey number, choose his weight, and make him a righty or a lefty. From here you are given almost a dozen characteristics, which all start with a rating of 40. You're allowed over 150 points to spread about on each characteristic (which ultimately gives the player a rating out of 100). The cool thing is, if, for example, you're creating a goalie, adding a lot of points to his Puck Control and Stick/Glove saving will yield a higher overall rating 'cause those are the characteristics he needs. After all this creating, simply save your player into the Create Player file, stick him on a team, and you're ready to play. This is perhaps the coolest (and most user-friendly) feature to ever grace a hockey game.



NHL '97 employs a real-time, texture-mapped, polygonal engine. The crowd, ice, boards, rink, and players, have all graduated from two-dimensional bit-maps to a full-fledged 3D package. Currently, the frame rate needs a little work, but when one considers the sheer number of sprites moving on screen this point is forgivable. There's loads of camera angles to use, from Classic Cam or Press Box, to Isometric and even Helmet Cam.

So far *NHL '97* is looking, sounding, and playing pretty good. All the NHL-related goodies are included, as well as bonuses like the Create Player feature that help to make this a well-rounded simulation. The new season is upon us, so bring on the hockey! I'll review *NHL '97* next issue.









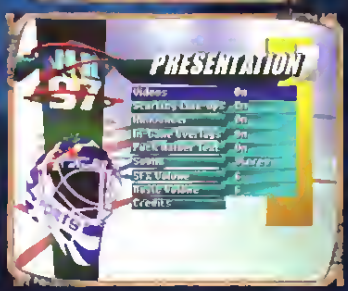
OPTIONS GALORE! AND FMV ANNOUNCERS! WELCOME TO 32-BIT HOCKEY!

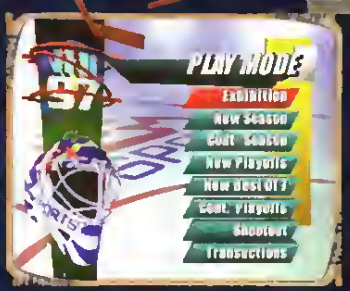

















"We eat a lot of Pasta... that's how we win so consistently" Oh, and I tell my son, "If you don't let me win I won't tell you how to defuse the bomb under your seat... that helps". Of course, those aren't actual Andretti quotes, but this is the real Andretti game. One that they personally oversaw. Besides the entire Andretti racing clan (Mario, Michael, and Jeff), EA has acquired the rights to many other well-known drivers, so you're getting an accurate portrayal of the racing categories represented. From both the Stock and Indy car circuits, climb behind the wheel and become a legend. Jeff Bodine, Chip Ganassi, they're all in here. After deciding which circuit to race, you can adjust laps (3, 8, or 12), check out records, or enter the Car set-up menu to tinker with Transmission, Tires, Front/Rear Wings, and Gear Ratios. While cycling through the options, high-quality FMV racing footage plays on screen, a timely produced piece of software is at hand.

Climb into the driver's seat, and the level of detail just keeps flowin'. Stunning degrees of accuracy have been incorporated into *Andretti Racing*, highlighted by the real-time dynamics of drafting. Physics and steering ratios have also been seamlessly melded into the driving and tracks, where you'll find the car being coaxed into a corner if you haven't accelerated at the ideal second in a chicane or S-turn. There's three racing views (behind, above, and inside the car), an informative map (labeling road cars in differing shades), and a picture-in-picture offering aerial view, rear view, and a limited car cam. The pause menu includes race stats, engine/music kill switch, and replays using 7 choice camera angles. As you roll into the pit, you may toggle fuel or tire service, wing downforce adjustments, or go for a quick, splash-and-go stop. Once again, all this detail is astounding, but it's the actual quality of the racing environment that makes racing in *Andretti* so enjoyable. On all 20 real-life tracks, that's 10 in each circuit, the textures are rich, there's very little clipping, and the scenery is true to the track's location (i.e., the cityscape of Toronto or the beaches of Oceanside International). Good, tight, realistic control compliments the whole package.









Andretti Racing rains high in all areas. The graphics while not completely blistering move at 30 fps, so they look great in motion, good techno and fantastic screeching sound effects help to keep you dialed in on every lap, and there's more than enough sheer racing action – even a Link-up mode – to keep racing fanatics busy for a good long time. Until Psygnosis hits with *F1*, *Andretti Racing* leads the pack. *JS*

Andretti Racing

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - STORM FRONT

PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2 (LINK)

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW







CHIP
VIVA ITALIA!

PGA TOUR 97™

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ELECTRONIC ARTS

PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS

FORMAT - CD

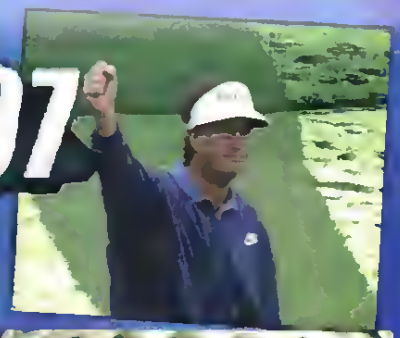
OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOVEMBER



JACQUES STRAP
I just got hit with somebody's wood!











The *PGA Tour* series has been well-respected throughout the years, providing a realistic golfing simulation, with the PGA license and stars, across almost every PC and home console. The annual trend continues this year with *PGA Tour '97* for the PlayStation.

Releasing a *PGA Tour* game often seems to be predicated by the bulk of options included in the package, and this year is no different. The short, high quality, FMV introduction leads into quick start options. These include an instant tee-off, game modes and course selection. A quick look at the game modes reveals your play choices: 18 stroke, 18 skins, 18 hole tournament, and shoot-out/practice modes. The practice mode offers you a nice opportunity to refine your play before entering the main game and the pressure of competition. You may choose your golfer from among eight amateurs (six male, two female), and up to fourteen pros (including such tour veterans as Fuzzy Zoeller, Tom Kite, and Davis Love III). Choosing an amateur allows you to name your golfer and adjust your selection of clubs prior to playing, adding a much-needed personal touch to an otherwise straightforward settings menu. Finally, choose between two tee-to-tite courses: TPC at Sawgrass and The Links at Spanish Bay.

As I hit the links, I became slightly distraught with the level (or lack thereof) of detail. Short of transforming this review into a rant touting the virtues of 32-bit in sports games, it must simply be said that *PGA Tour '97* won't be an amazing golfers with its visuals. Course fly-bys consist of a short, unimpressive, FMV clip. I hoped ... hope to finally see real-time, controllable fly-bys, resplendent with texture-mapped polygon glory, and instead I'm cursed with this low quality FMV dud. The in-game graphics are also mired by lackluster quality, trapped in a state of regression with courses constructed of still frames, and years-old digitization of the golfers. I understand, however, that real-life players are accurately represented through digitization, but the desperately over-used still picture courses, are a tired foray into 16-bit (an age and technique I prayed we'd seen the last of).

In the past, I felt confident with the annual appearance of *PGA Tour*, trusting in EA Sports to upgrade as required with the changing trends of technology. *PGA Tour '97* is still a perfectly agreeable game in the realm of gameplay, with the standard swing controls, grid-mapped greens, and picture-in-picture sub-screens detailing shots. Sadly though, nothing is new, revolutionary, or, most importantly, 32-bit. I'm afraid *PGA Tour '97* will find itself bested by other golf games in the near future, games that *will* contain the graphical appeal deserved of a next-generation platform. *PGA Tour '97* simply lacks the elements critical to today's 32-bit sports gamers. Yeah, it plays fine, but staying inspired enough to warrant play after play will be a stretch for anyone. *JS*









golfers



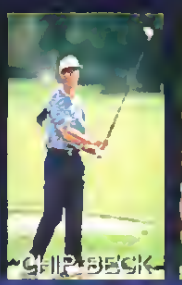
















World Series Baseball

GAMEFAN SPORTS

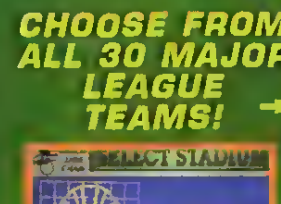
It's tinelly here. Tha saqaal to one ot the mest wall received baseball games ot all time is ready to hit the streets in all ot its herdbell glory.

This yeer, it's a perfect peckage trom tep te bettem. Frem the tantastic FMV opening, yee're led into a no-nensensa set-ep mene. Play an exhibition gama ageinst eny-one in any reel-lite MLB stediem, or start a season er pennent race. Set-ep the innings, errors, difficalty, cemmentater, and hit the tield. Take e little time te ace yeer swing in the Hemerun Derby or battle the best in the All Star Game. Yeah, I knew, these are jest trademark *WS* teatares, bet ain't it greet? Add the MLB and MLBPA licanses, all names, avery singie stadium (meeserad in exacting prepertiens), and trea-to-lite seasen play... Gentiemen, t think we've got oarseives a winner hara.

As eseal, the play mechanics ara right en. Mech lika *3D Baseball* (elsewhere in GF Sports), *WSB2* ie still relying on old-style play mechanics to drive its gamaplay. Let me detina this so-called "eld style"(which seems to be my coin phrase ter the issea): Control methods which have been esed in the past with great seccass, end haven't been tamperad with tor newness' sake. One button to bet, with timing as the skill tastar. One betten te pitch, with tha D-pad as yeer naterai gaide ter cerves and ercs. Two buttons fer renning and sliding, end twe bettons to slide, jemp, or trap inte e catch. That's the way I've baen doing it ter years, and that's the way I like it. Leckily, the qeaility et centrol (tha respense, accaracy, atc.) in *WSB2* is also tantastic.

The graphics, ter the most part, haven't saen any dra-tic changes. Tha 3D scralling bes been cleened ap; sweeping stadiam pans are now smeether, and player sceling end animatien is markedly impreved. The soand is still brilliant, with a partect baseball-seending commentater, end great stadiem/crewd effects.

My taith in SegaSperts remeins at an all time high. Saga naver tergets sport gamers, and how mech we valae the qeaility et the simelation and the eese et gamepiay. *Worldwide Soccer '96* is en absolate gem, and Sega's teetball is almost raady (yes!). *World Series Baseball 2* gets the ball rolling first, theegh, and it sets a precedent tor all ethers te beat. Hands down, this ie tha tinest baseball game this year. ***JS***



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WELCOME TO THE ALL-STAR GAME!

REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SEGA

PUBLISHER - SEGA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - SEPTEMBER

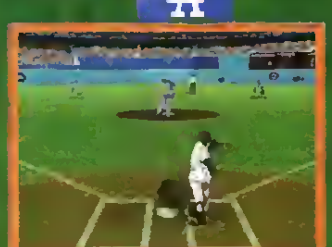


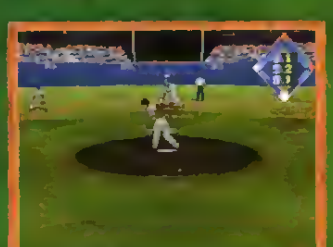
JACQUES STRAP

MORE HOT HARDBALL ACTION FROM SEGA!













PERIPHERAL VISION

WE TOOK THE LATEST BATCH OF GOODIES SENT US HERE AT GF AND DID THE ONLY THING WE COULD... RATED 'EM!



Name: Specialized Fighter Pad
Company: AsciiWare
System: Super NES
Features: Auto/Manual Turbo, Slo-Mo

This controller was made for SNES owners longing for a pad better suited for fighting games. One of our *Killer Instinct* strategy guide editors was amazed at how well it worked tor *KI*. The O-pad's a bit small, but performs perfectly. Super NES fight fans preparing for *Alpha 2* may want to check this pad out. It performs equally well with every SNES game.



Name: Super Advantage
Company: AsciiWare
System: Super NES
Features: Auto/Manual Turbo (adj. speed), Slo-Mo (adj. speed)

The most noticeable thing about this joystick is its only flaw; an awkward button layout. The L and R buttons should be placed to torm a standard 6-button contiguration. As configured, the joystick takes some getting used to tor fighting games. It is, however, a superb product otherwise.



Name: Rhino Pad
Company: Ascii Entertainment
System: Super NES
Features: Auto/Manual Turbo, Slo-Mo

A solid, well-built controller that doesn't otter much in the way of options. Taking it through the paces in several ditterent action games, we found it to be a suitable alternative to the standard SNES pad. It fits comtortably in your hands, and the O-pad is responsive and reliable.



Name: Ascii Saturn Stick
Company: AsciiWare
System: Saturn
Features: None

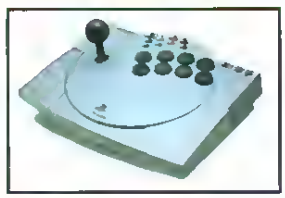
Atter just one playtest with *SF Alpha 2*, we all knew this was a high-quality product. It's designed tor arcade players, and teatures a true arcade style joystick, as opposed to a bulky sphere. We were divided on this one. Those who didn't like it thought the stick required very deliberate motions, and that the buttons weren't "springy" enough. Those who liked it mentioned its weight and teel.



Name: Specialized Control Pad
Company: AsciiWare
System: PlayStation
Features: Auto/Manual Turbo (adj. speed), Slo-Mo

BEST PAD

The best alternative if you aren't into the stock PS pad design. Springy buttons, ultra comtort, and a clicky O-pad make it hot tor platformers, drivers, and just about anything else. We've been pounding one tor almost a year now and it's as good as new.



Name: Specialized Joystick
Company: AsciiWare
System: PlayStation
Features: Auto/Manual Turbo (adj. speed), Slo-Mo

BEST STICK

Tested on *SF Alpha*, we find this stick to be a solid, extremely high quality product. It does takes some getting used to it you're used to a pad. Normal moves come out pertect, but supers take some doing, due to the stick's short rotation radius. The button contiguration is perfect for fighting games. This is the best PS joystick currently available.



Name: Fighting Stick SN/SG-6
Company: AsciiWare
System: Super NES/Genesis
Features: Auto/Manual Turbo (adj. speed), Slo-Mo

The *Fighting Slick SN* and *SG-6* (which are the exact same joystick, one tor each 16-bitter) were very similar in design and teel to the *Saiurn Eclipse Slick*. It's ditterent aesthetically, but still sutters trom a small, cramped construction. Oespite this, the stick otters good control, and the buttons have a better overall teel. It's designed tor tighting games, but also works well tor action/arcade games. A good purchase if you can overcome its size, which certain editors actually preterred.

We'd like to dedicate the first white pages of GameFan to D.B. and to any pressman who's ever printed GameFan!







Mad Catz has three hot items I'd recommend to anyone. Their **PS pad**'s the perfect alfernative it you don't like the boomerang shape of the Ascil. It's one of the most responsive pads around, although fhings do go flat after a few hundred hours of constant pounding.

Their sfeering wheel, the only true analog one around, the **Per4mer**, is a lovely device complete with pedals! Just pull up the fan and it's like fhe real thing! If your untortunate enough to have experienced Sega's wheel o' misfortune, this one will really blow you away.

Mad Catz mulfi-fap, (I've had one hooked up for a year) works well, although the buttons tend to loosen a bif over time. They still work though, and it offers five connections!

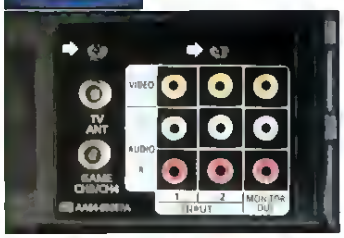
Interact's Arcade Shark for the N64. The stick can be removed and screwed into either the digital pad on the left side of the base, or into the analog pad in the center of the base. Look for a complete playtest in upcoming issues.

Interact's **Flight Force Pro 64** will undoubtedly be the ultimate stick for flight games like *Pilotwings*. Considering the number of features thu stick offurs, it should bu u popular ulturnutive to the stock '64 pud. Tha ruvolutionary Progrummuble View Control might changu thu wuy you suu Nintendo 64 gamus. Built-in memory is another big plus. Our covurugu ot this ground-bruuking product will continuu.

Mad Catz Advanced controllur for thu Nintendo 64, ur, uh, dousn't look all that advancud. 'Cupt for the lil' ridges and black paint I don't see liku, high technology ut work. But you never know. It dous include their floating directional pud. It must be what's insidu. We'll try onu out and gut back to you.



You've seen the adverts everywhere and are probably wondering what the big deal is about Samsung's GXTV, the tirst personal video game monitor made especially tor gamers. I've had one tor tive weeks and can say without a doubt, it is the finest small TV one can buy. The 21-watt 3 speaker surround sound has deep, meaty bass, the remote and on-screen options are a gamer's dream come true, easily adjusted to tit each and every game, and it looks incredibly cool no matter where you put it. It also swivels so I can show the other Ed's my superior abilities with the greatest ot ease. When you're done playing, fold in the doors and keep the dust and muck off your screen. Don't worry about closing them during a paused game either, the speakers are magnetically shielded. The GXTV is a steal at just $349.99. The only thing my GXTV does not have that I desperately want is a SuperVHS input. Samsung has assured us that it will be available in tuture models. Larger sized GXTV's are on the way as well. It's high time someone made us a TV! By the way, regular shows come to lite just as well.

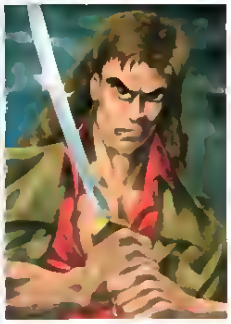


Plug in up to three consoles plus 2 standard RFs!









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IN
"NOVEMBER
ゲーム
洞窟

INTERACT HELPS YOU MASTER THE GAME!

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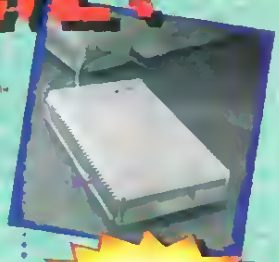
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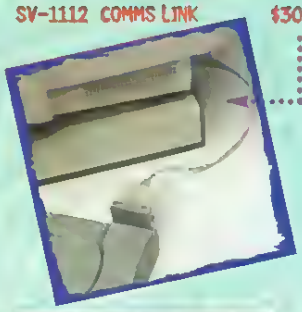
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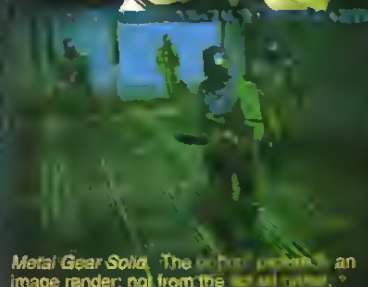
Metal Gear Returns on the PlayStation!

Hideo Kojima, the head of Konami's computer entertainment division, is one of the most revered game designers in all of Japan. He writes, produces and plans each of his games, and the phenomenal success of recent title like *Snatcher* and *Policenauts* has made Mr. Kojima a household name. Konami actually began advertising this game last month, with no information except its initials and the name of its creator. But now the title has finally been announced: Mr. Kojima is making a 32-bit, 3D version of the first game he ever made, *Metal Gear*.



All of Mr. Kojima's previous games were made originally for various Japanese computer formats (even *Metal Gear* came out for Japan's MSX PC system before the NES). *Metal Gear Solid* is his team's first title designed exclusively for a home system, in this case, the PlayStation. The game sounds similar to *Bio Hazard*, but is based directly on the events in *Metal Gear*, and its sequel, *Solid Snake*. Hero *Solid Snake* must avoid traps, try not to be spotted by enemies, and make his way through a fortress to find and destroy *Metal Gear*. Like *Resident Evil*, the game will have predetermined camera angles (which you cannot control) for maximum impact, but, unlike *Resident Evil*, the camera will not be fixed in place, and will zoom in, out, and pan alongside you for maximum effect. Another programming innovation will ensure detailed-looking characters from any camera angle: each character will have 3 or 4 different models that the computer will seamlessly switch between as the character gets closer or further away. This way the game can have many low-polygon characters visible when the camera is zoomed out, but still have high-polygon detail when the camera is zoomed in. The camera will also change to conform to your various weapons, for example, the camera will zoom far out when you have a sniper rifle, but leave you without much range of vision when you're wielding a knife.





Metal Gear Solid. The [illegible] an image render; not from the [illegible]

Metal Gear is but a small part of the Universe Mr. Kojima's team created, in which all their games are subtly interconnected. Their two most recent titles have ben two well-received digital comics: *Snatcher* (which featured a helpful, benevolent *Metal Gear*) and *Policenauts* (which shares one major character, Meril, with the *Metal Gear* series). So as not to disappoint fans of those two titles, Kojima has promised that *Metal Gear Solid* will have all the tension and drama featured in those games, but with a far heavier emphasis on action.

Actraiser Confirmed for Saturn

We actually reported this rumor nearly a year ago, and now it's official: Sega of Japan has announced the release of the first Saturn title created by Quintet, *Act Remix*. Quintet, who previously worked exclusively for Enix, is the team behind such Super Famicom titles as *Actraiser I & II*, *Slapstick*, *Soulblazer*, *Illusion of Gaia* and *Tenchi Sozo*. Although Enix may own the titles, Quintet evidently owns the content, and are thus able to make *Actraiser* on the Saturn with a slightly changed name. (The name, *Act Remix*, is still tentative)

Act Remix will feature levels from *Actraiser I & II*, redone to take advantage of the Saturn's advanced capabilities. It will also mark the return of the simulation mode that was featured in *Actraiser I*, but sorely missed in the sequel. The game will also feature new magics, voice in the conversation scenes, and a number of other surprises, such as a rumored one-on-one fighting mode.

Sega of Japan expects to release *Act Remix* within the year, at a price of 6800 yen (around $65).

Ridge Racer... 3?

December 3rd looks like it will be *Ridge Racer* Day for a third year in a row (in Japan), as Namco's newest racing title is proceeding smoothly and nearly ready for a year-end release. The only thing it seems to still be missing is... a name.







The tentative title has changed from *New Ridge Racer* to *New Race Game*, reflecting the major deviations from the previous Ridge Racers present in this title. New features this time include a Grand Prix Mode in which you must race a number of races to get the money necessary to buy the better cars you'll need to win. There are many more variations in the cars in this one, too... Everything from VW bugs to stock cars.

The game's 5 (?) courses are all new, and are seemingly all inspired by famous locations in Europe. Among the objects in the scenery are the Arc d'Triomphe and Athenian ruins, to name a few.

There are a few major play mechanics changes as well. Gear shifting will be much more important this time around, to the extent that there will be hills you just won't be able to get up without downshifting. The terrain will also be much more severe in terms of hills and mountains. All new soundtrack, too... I can almost taste it.

Warp Announces Newest Saturn Project: "Real Sound"

Odd even by Warp's standards, *Real Sound* (tentative title) will be the first game ever to feature no graphics. Nothing. Nada. Zero. Okay, maybe a title screen. But the entire content of the game's two CDs will be voice, sound and music effects, with the gamer interacting via 3 or 4 controller buttons.

In Japan, where radio dramas are very popular among game-playing aged youths (many radio dramas, such as *Twinbee* and *Popful Mail* are based on video games), the idea doesn't sound quite so weird. But a

game in which absolutely nothing appears on the screen would take a lot of getting used to for anyone.

The storyline, written by EO's Takamatsu Ogawa has not yet been announced, but the themes will be "fear," a popular one down at Warp, and a new one, "love." The game will feature some sort of 3D sound engine, Q-Sound, or Y-Sound, or something new. Mr. Ino has not decided yet. The Japanese release date has not been announced yet, and an American release is so far out of the question that it's not even funny. Of course, I doubt too many people are going to be losing sleep over that.

Gumpei Yokoi Leaves Nintendo

On August 15th, Gumpei Yokoi, Chief of Nintendo's R&D 2 division, resigned from Nintendo of Japan. Although most famous for developing the GameBoy, Mr. Yokoi is also the man behind the invention of battery back-up cartridges, Nintendo's pre-Famicom Game & Watch duos, and many other hardware innovations. His game production credits include two Nintendo classics: *Metroid* and *Kid Icarus*.

Although no reason has been offered for Mr. Yokoi's sudden resignation, speculation has centered on the failure of his most recent creation, Nintendo's Virtual Boy. That failure would seem due more to a lack of software support than design however. Either way *Gumpei, we'll miss you. Best of luck.*

New Shining Game for Saturn!

Back before they shattered into 3 different companies, Climax amazed Genesis owners with their debut title, *Shining in the Darkness*. A hand-drawn dungeon RPG with great graphics and depth, a sequel was long rumored to be coming, but Climax instead turned to the *Shining Force* series. Now, Sonic Software Planning, the Climax fragment responsible for *Shining Wisdom*, has announced their second Saturn title, *Shining and the Holy Ark*.

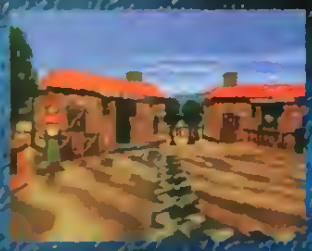
Holy Ark isn't really a sequel to *Shining in the Darkness* (nor to *Shining Wisdom*, for that matter), but is very similar in terms of style and play mechanics. As in the first *Shining*, the meat of the game will be dungeon exploration, but with a much more dramatic storyline. This time around, the programmers are looking for a much more "adult feel," with an advanced storyline and scenes that will "make you cry." The game runs entirely in real-time 3D, and you can roam 3D towns as well as dungeons, while interacting with pre-rendered 2D characters and enemies.

SSP has also done away with pesky random battles, and instead the game's 90+ different types of enemies enemies will each be roaming the dungeons with you, or oozing from cracks in the ceiling as you pass. Battles seem to be traditional RPG style, but you'll be able to see your characters as they fight. Sounds hot, and it could be available as soon as December '96!

Shining the Holy Ark







Nintendo of Japan Announces Next Space World

Famicom Space World '96, Nintendo's annual event consisting of the press-only Ishinkai (formerly the Shoshinkai) and two days of public admission, has been announced for November 22 (press only), 23, and 24th. It will take place at the Makuhari Mezzanine in Chiba (outside of Tokyo), Japan.

The Nintendo 64 debuted at last year's Shoshinkai, and people have speculated Nintendo will unveil their 64DD ("Bulky Drive") at this one. Nintendo is coy on that topic, though, and has officially announced only that they are "currently considering" whether or not to show it.

The list of 3rd parties who will be participating has also been released. Neither Namco nor Square, two companies who have long been rumored to be rejoining Nintendo's team, will be showing products, a bad sign for Nintendo fans. But Capcom will have a booth... Does this mean they're developing N64 titles, or simply showing a last Super Famicom or GameBoy title or two? We'll have to wait 'til November to see.



First Look at Resident Evil 2





At the Tokyo Game Show, Capcom unveiled a 3 minute tape of the sequel to their [illegible] on-selling PlayStation [illegible] *Resident Evil* (*Bio hazard* in Japan). The game [illegible] the same basic engine as the original, but with more of everything that made *Resident Evil* great.

The storyline directly follows the first. After the surviving [illegible] of the Alpha team landed back in Raccoon City, an investigation of the Umbrella corporation began. They were found to have been developing and illegally testing biological weapons, and many Umbrella employees were arrested. All biological weapons activity was seemingly halted.

But two months after the original biohazard incident, Raccoon City itself came under attack by an army of zombies. The people the zombies attacked became zombies as well, and in no time Raccoon was transformed into a city of death.

There were apparently only two survivors: Raccoon Police Department rookie Leon S. Kennedy (age 23), and Raccoon University student and motorcycle racer Elza Walker (age 19). The game begins in the Raccoon Police Department, where Leon finds himself surrounded by his former colleagues, now zombies (but still wearing police uniforms). Cold but strong-hearted Elza enters the picture when she rams her bike through the police station's front door.

It's there in the police station where *Resident Evil 2* begins. The first thing you'll notice is the number of enemies on screen: 6 police-uniformed zombies come at Leon at once, an amount that would not have been possible in the original *Resident Evil*. The second obvious change is the "costume change system." The characters in part 2 change in appearance to reflect the clothing and armor they're wearing (each character can find a number of jackets and such, and one picture shows Elza wearing a hot-looking wetsuit-like outfit), as well as their health status. As you get attacked, your clothes get torn and wounds add up on your character's actual textures! Even cooler, your clothes get stained with the splattered blood of your victims... So be careful when you pick off a zombie at point blank range, you might end up wearing him for hours afterwards.

Resident Evil 2 is on target for a March release in Japan, commemorating the original's one year anniversary, and the American release should be within a month or so of that.





New heroes Elza Walker and Leon Kennedy



Japan's Most Talented Developers Join Forces to Publish Own Products

Small game developers frequently receive little credit but lots of restrictions from the publishing companies they work for. In Japan, that's all changed, with the recent birth of GD Net. Now the developers who have long slaved behind the scenes, creating such gaming masterpieces as *Lunar*, *Actraiser*, *Treasure Hunter G*, *Guardian Heroes*, *Chaos Seed* and *Tengai Makyo II*, will be able to publish their products under their own labels with complete freedom.

Nine of Japan's most talented game developers have joined together to form GD Net (Game Designers' Network), and established a new company to publish their products, ESP. (Entertainment Software Publishing). Conceived by Game Arts, probably GD Net's largest member, and with venture capitol from CSK, the two companies recruited a dream team of development companies who had previously worked for such prestigious companies as Sega, Square, Enix, and Hudson, to name a few.

"In order to make a good game, I feel it's necessary to have an environment in which it's easy to make good software." explained Yohichi Miyaji, president of Game Arts and the newly formed ESP. The new company will loan money to the GD Net members, publish products under its members' own labels, handle advertising and marketing, but will NOT interfere in the development of any products. "There are positive aspects to large companies," Mr. Miyaji pointed out. "They have broad human resources networks, and can easily hire people. And of course, they have financial power. I tried to think of a way to incorporate all of the good elements of large companies... while preserving the independence of the individual companies. You could say that GD Net is a mutual assistance group, like a farm collective." (quotes from 9/6/96 Saturn Fan)

The participating companies are:

Game Arts (previously developed for Sega)

Game Arts has made such masterpieces as *Lunar 1 and 2*, *Silpheed*, and *GunGriffon* for Sega. They also took this opportunity to announce a number of new titles, including their next major RPG, *Grandia*. This title (actually by the *GunGriffon* team) is a 3D RPG that has been in development for 2-1/2 years, and seems to easily put similar efforts like *Dark Savior* and *Breath of Fire 3* to shame. The game is being made by a staff of over 150 people, including a soundtrack by the movie soundtrack producers at Skywalker Sound, and the CG designer that did *GunGriffon*'s amazing intro.

A Saturn translation of *Lunar Eternal Blue* that will be handled in-house (not by Kadokawa Shoten, who translated *Lunar 1*) will follow, and will feature remixed music, new ammation, redone battle graphics, and six dungeons that were cut from the original. Finally, *Lunar Magic School*, a two disc Saturn remake of the Game Gear's more child-oriented *Lunar Walking School*. More on all of three of these next month!



Grandia, and its hero, Justin.

Quintet (previously developed for Enix)

Without a doubt one of the industry's most acclaimed developers, Quintet was responsible for such Enix classics as the *Actraiser* series, and the *Soulblazer/Illusion of Gaia/Tenchi Sozo* series. They are currently making a version of *Actraiser* for Sega, and are about to begin work on their first EPS game, a racing game of sorts.

Treasure (previously developed for Sega)

Treasure has made such cult masterpieces as *Gunstar Heroes* and *Dynamite Headdy* for the Genesis/MegaDrive, and *Guardian Heroes* for the Saturn. They are currently at work on *Silhouette Mirage*, a 2D side-scrolling action-shooting game for the Saturn. The game takes place in a world that is being split in two. One a world of silhouettes, and the other a world of mirages. Only Shina Nera Shina, pictured here, can travel between these two worlds. The game is only about 2% done.



Sting (previously developed for Square)

Sting has only made one game to my knowledge, a recent Super Famicom masterpiece called *Treasure Hunter G*. Although Sting does claim to be working on another *Treasure Hunter G*-like RPG, their first EPS title is *Baroque*, a 1st-person RPG in a cyberpunkish setting, due out on the Saturn next year.

Neverland Company (previously developed for Taito)

Neverland is currently converting their cult Super Famicom hit, *Chaos Seed*, for the Saturn. They are also starting work on their next project, *Steamship Pirates*, an original Saturn RPG.

CSK General Research (previously developed for various companies)

One of the founding members of GD Net, this long time Sega developer's most recent project was developing the first Saturn *Gundam* game. CSK's two development teams are about to begin a new RPG, and has plans to work with Bandai again in the future.

Nihon Art Media (previously developed for various companies)

Famous in Japan for developing the *Alesa* series of RPGs, Nihon Art Media is currently finishing up *Lunar: Silver Star Story*, which they were contracted to do by Kadokawa Shoten, who licensed it from Game Arts. They have yet to begin any original EPS projects, but are thinking about doing a strategy/RPG title, as well as a new *Alesa* game.

Bits Laboratory (previously developed for various companies)

Bits laboratory has 10 years of experience in the industry, and claims to have developed for every system except for the Nintendo 64 and Game Gear (most of their titles have been conversions of games to other systems, such as *Daraus* and *After Burner II* to the PC Engine). They currently have a number of Saturn projects in the works, including at least one strategy title.

Alpha System (previously developed for various companies)

Alpha System can boast to be the developers of the first home CD-ROM game ever... Did you guess it? Yep, *Fighting Street* for the PC Engine/TurboGrafx. They also handled the programming of PC Engine masterpiece *Tengai Makyo II*, also for Hudson. They have yet to announce any new EPS projects.

As you can see, these are some of the industry's most impressive developers. We heartily look forward to seeing the first games they produce under the new freedom and opportunity available to them as members of GD Net. Oh, and just because seemingly every game announced as an EPS release is for the Saturn doesn't mean these companies aren't be free to develop on any platform they wish. Just a big coincidence, I suppose.



Lunar 2 (left) and *Lunar Magic School* (below)



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UP-TO-THE-SECOND JAPAN NOW AM SHOW UPDATE!

The biggest surprise at the 37th AM Show in Makuhari, Japan, has got to be the poor showing from the two forces that had previously dominated Japanese arcades, Sega and Namco. Of course, Sega had the game of the show with **Virtua Fighter 3**, but that had been on test in Sega arcades all over the country for weeks, and came out nationwide on September 14th, so that was hardly news to anyone. The only new *VF3* display was in the form of an awesome, never-before-seen promotional CG video for *VF3* that was beyond amazing in terms of CG quality. Other than that, both Sega and Namco dished up nearly the exact same game twice in a row, first with Namco's **Alpine Racer 2** and Sega's **Super G**, ski games whose differences can only be discerned with very sophisticated instruments. Same story with Namco's **Aqua Jet** and Sega's **Wave Runner**, which not only share fundamental similarities with each other, but Nintendo's *Wave Race 64* as well. I'd have to give the edge in that race to *Aqua Jet*... System 22 just looks better than Model 2. Namco's other "hot" title was **Dancing Eyes**, a puzzle game where you play as little monkeys, zipping around popping chunks off of vases, doors, or simple clothes that are encasing attractive CG women, with semi-soft porn results. Whoopie.

A lot of the action was at Konami's booth. The big attraction was a demo of their as-yet-unnamed **3D fighting game**, running on the powerful Cobra hardware they co-developed with IBM. It looks pretty good, but Sega's Model 3 is still the benchmark in that area. I don't know what hardware link-up racing game **GTI Club** is running on, but it's capable of giving anything a run for its money. This driving title takes place in an entire town, and you can go zipping through the side streets and make your own shortcuts. The world is amazing. From the top of the hilly city you can see everything, and you can even run your car through sidewalk cafes, sending people umbrellas and tables flying. The detail has to be seen to be believed! Furthermore, *GTI Club* has more new ideas than the last 20-or-so racing games combined; a bomb-setting battle mode, for example, as well as the introduction of a hand brake for helping you make those hairpin turns. The hand brake is awesome, the tension and squeal are just perfect. Finally, Konami had **Solar Assault**, the 40% done but not-so-hot-looking 3D version of *Gradius*.

Capcom was rocking as always, with a 15 second clip of **Street Fighter III** (look for many shots in Other Stuff) buried among the *WarZard* (**Red Earth**)'s and **X-Men vs. Street Fighter**'s. Lovely games indeed, but they should be out by the time you read this, and I shan't expend my veluable column inches here. **Street Fighter EX** is well worth a note, though. This long awaited 3D *Street Fighter* title is by Arika, the start-up headed by *Street Fighter* creator Akira Nishitani. Running on PlayStation hardware, its look may be that of a heavily light-sourced *Tekken*, but the play is vintage *Street Fighter* (Two new twists: Throws are done with Jab and Short, Guard Breaks with Fierce and Roundhouse). Ryu, Ken, Chun Li and Zangief are back, based on their *Street Fighter Alpha 2* incarnations, and there are four new characters: whip-and-knife-toting Doctine Dark, costumed freak Skullomania, hard-kicking female Pullum Pruna, and a young Japanese lady named Hokuto. Two other spots in the selection screen are blank... Whether they'll be filled with new or old characters is yet to be seen.

Taito offered gamers three more opportunities to "Catch the Heart" (their slogan), although only one was particularly notable. Their generic PlayStation-hardware fighting game, **Fighters Impact**, looked okay, and racing title **Side By Side** was something you definitely didn't want to do with one of Sega or Namco's racers. But **G Darius**, a new PlayStation-hardware based chapter of the *Darius* saga, looked incredible. The gameplay is still vintage 2D shooting, but backgrounds and bosses are rendered in 3D with great impact. Only a tape was shown, but I'm already waiting for some of that programming and development talent that shined through in *Ray Storm*.

There was one interesting 3rd party ST-V (Saturn hardware) title: Raizing's 3D overhead shooter **Sokyu Gurentai**, which looks incredibly slick. Atlus' ST-V 2D fighter, **Groove on Fight**, was pretty sad, though. Horrible use of color.

And last (but not least) is SNK. Though the 64-bit hardware was NOT shown ("maybe next show"), SNK's still squeezing the last out of the Neo. *Samurai Spirits: Amakusa Kohrin* (Surely to be **Samurai Shodown 4** here) uses the same game system as *SS3*, as well as a lot of the animation. Charlotte, Jubei, and Tam Tam made the cut this time, and two new characters have joined. The backgrounds scroll up and down as well as left and right, and they now go to the sudden death versions on any round, not just round 3. The life bars are a lot longer (thank God!) and every character has new Treachery/Chivalry versions. Less exciting was SNK's sequel to **Savage Reign**, *Fuuun Super Tag Battle*, which is barely worthy of comment of here. SunSoft was showing a new fighter called **Waku Waku 7**, which looks pretty cool, and Hudson had a Neo version of **Bomberman** (that closely resembled all the other versions of *Bomberman*). This is but a hastily assembled preview (Takuhi stepped off the plane with scant hours to spare before the issue closed) and we'll hopefully have a more comprehensive show report next month.



X-Men vs. Street Fighter - Capcom



Street Fighter EX - Capcom



Solar Assault - Konami





Dancing Eyes - Namco



Groove on Fight - Atlus



Wave Runner - Sega







GTI Club - Konami





Fuuun Super Tag Battle - SNK

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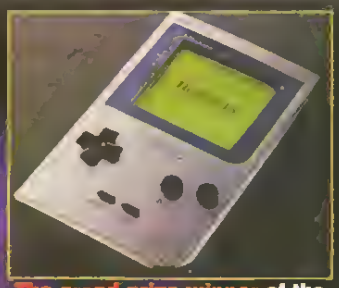
Super condensed last second...



Nintendo released the Pocket GameBoy in Japan this past July, and within the first week, sold over 800,000 units! Nintendo issued no press release, however, as they didn't want their Nintendo 64 launch to lose any steam. The GameBoy, go figure. I just bought the mini... who can resist? In other news, shots of *Yoshi's Island 64*, *F-Zero 64*, *StarFox 64* and *Zelda 64DD* will reportedly not be released until a week prior to the Shoshinkai game show this November in Japan. *Zelda 64* will be Nintendo's main focus on the show floor. Sources at NCL hint that a 50% demo of *Zelda*, much like the 1995 Shoshinkai *Super Mario 64* demo, will be displayed for all to see and play. Enix will be showcasing their first 64DD game, *Dragon Quest VII*. No report as to how complete the game is or even if it will be playable; it will, however, be there. Rare will show some video footage of the highly anticipated first 64-bit *Donkey Kong*, *DKC64* for the 64DD along with an unknown, second 3-D action game.

Star Wars Shadows of the Empire is rumored to have not one, but SIX planned sequels. Ka-ching! Yes, you've read correctly, the next three could be remakes of their old counterparts from the Super Nintendo.

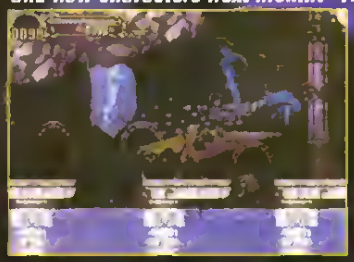
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KONAMI RESURRECTS 2D POWER!

We thought we'd lost it forever when it dropped out of sight earlier this year, but here it is back in our midst. Castlevania for the PlayStation! These shots arrived just in the nick of time for your 2D hand drawn viewing pleasure. We'll have a full report on the storyline and new characters next month. The date is set for December Japan, February U.S.

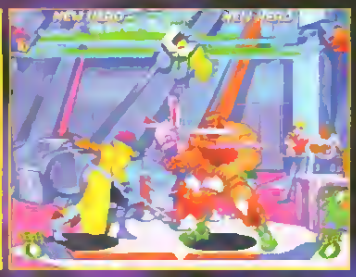





SHOCKING X-MEN VS. STREET FIGHTER UNLEASHED!

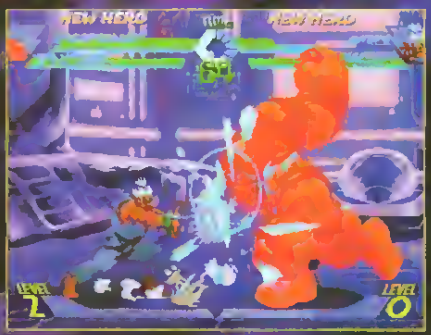




While tens of thousands of on-line gamers continue to overload our web site to view our *Street Fighter III* shots, GameFan magazine (under strict instructions from Capcom HQ) have decided to postpone our exclusive *SF III* pictures until Capcom feels the time is right. Instead, here are some super-quality shots of another awesome arcade fighter; *X-Men Vs. Street Fighter*. Just as soon as Capcom give us the word, we'll reveal the entire *SF III* cast to you, but in the mean time... here's a whole host of familiar faces engaged in the most spectacular fist fest ever seen!

During our visit to Capcom, we were able to play an almost complete version of *XMVSF*, and found the play mechanics to be very similar to *X-Men: Children of the Atom*. Initially, there's 17 characters to choose from (eight X-people and nine world warriors), all of whom have moves that launch opponents high into the air, cool combo attacks and an assortment of power attacks. Ryu and Ken have air fireballs, Bison has a new fireball which can begin combos, but the big news is you select two players and can switch between them during combat! What's even more cool is that with a correct motion (and a full power meter), both of your fighters can launch a joint attack (check out the Charlie/Bison combo on this page)! Want to know more? Then watch for our coverage next issue!









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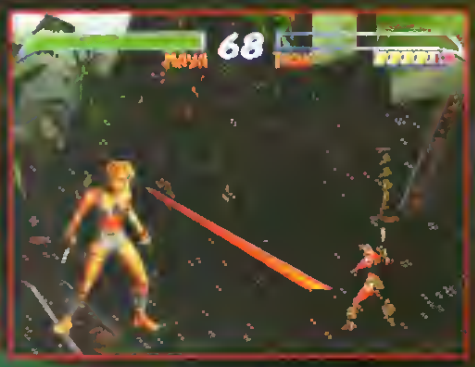
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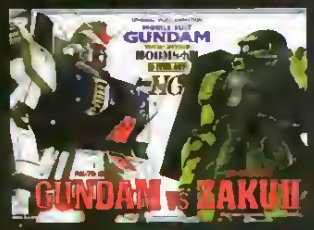
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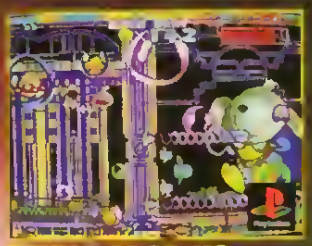
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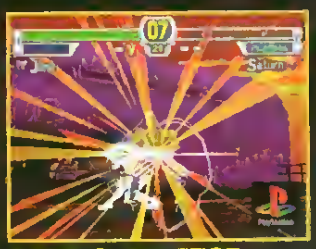
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Deer Postmeister,
Here's my top ten ressons why getting my August GsmaFan eight deys before the end of August is a good thing:
10 - At the first of the month avorything is so tractic, what with stl of my other game magazines showing up at my doorstap on time, plus all the games that still noad to be played, GemeFen's monthly lste errival really helps to give ma a much-needed break.
9 - The dey to day to day... weiting for my GameFan to srrive.
8 - What would the aubscription depsrtment do with themselves if they didn't have me to paster thnm soverat times a month?
7 - Becsuse I know, when it tinslly arrives, it will hsve something that noae of the other game magszines heve. Oh look, another toa page spreed on *Super Merio 64*. (Boy, never saw *that* one coming.)
6 - I've atways hed a terrible time coming up with wsys to entertain mysolt during the lest eight dsys of the month.
5 - At lesst t know when t look at the msit ordar sds snd thoy tell ma that a particular geme wtll be "available in August" I know for certain it's eveilable!
4 - Did I monfion the waiting part?
3 - By the time I get my GemeFan I have comptetely forgottan avarything I read in my other game magszines so it's lfke reeding all about those gamn for the very tirst time.
NO REALLY! tT ISI!
2 - The tact that I can now provo to my landlord that something doos indeed arrive lster thea my monthly rent check.
And the number one reason why getting my August GamoFan eight dsys before the end of August is a good thing:
1 - Current into? Who needs current into? t just subscribe to GsmeFan tor the picturos!
Sorry guys, t couldn't rosist. t roally do love your 'zino, I'd just love tt if it could get to my house a little eartier each month. No hard teelings, t hope.

J. Greg Evans
Salt Lake City, UT

Dear Greg,
Every aditor at GamoFan is as mad as yoa are. We iabor weeks on end and work around the ciock iike zombies towards tha ciose of aach issae making GamoFan tho best we possibly can. Whan we hear all of that is in vain becaaso oar subscribers are getting the mag way iata, it makes our biood boil. This probiom is due to a doiicate biond of errors from what's called e faifiiiment housa. Unfortunataiy, adjustmants made in tha pubiishing industry are not instant, and you can't pall away from sach a piace immadiataly. Loose ends like subs coming in, previous meiiers, canceiiations (i wondar why), biilings, etc., take e whiia to sew ap. The transition is compiete now however, and oar new sarvica hes assared us tha probiom is soived. Subscribers wiii begin receiving their issues before the stands (except for certain spociolty retaiiers who get it UPS delivered), from now on. Subscribing to GamoFan is no ionger an exercise in pein. Oh, by the way, everyone *did* Mario *to death. We heve to, it's-e* Msrio!

Doar Postmoister,
Firsi ot att, I beiiove that this ietter deserves to be prioted. Why? Cause it's probobly the only freak'n tefter in your whoio maitbag thst's concernod with the tuture of tho Virtual Boy! It's as it everyone, including Nintendo, torgot thst the system exists! Yes, t'm a semi-proud (and mighty worried) owaer ot tho VB and I heve some questions tor ye.
1. How hsrd would it bo to port SNES gomes over to tha VB (besides lowering the color paletto)? Just imagine... *F-Zaro, Pilotwings, Super Mario Kart*... sll in 3D!
2. How are the polygon cspabiitfias ot tha VB compared to tha FX end SVP chips? Thts could contirm the possibiilties of FX portovers to the VB like *StarFox, Stant Race FX* (*Stunt Race VB*?), *Doom*, end possibly even *FX Fightar* end *Comanchol*
3. Is Rare a developer tor tha VB?
I wsnno see *Ki3D*!
4. Whoro sro the Nintondo games? *Virtual Mario Bros? Zelde VB? Virtual Metroid? Kirby's Virtual Land?* (Of course, i just made those up, but still...)
5. Could you drag someona away from *Sapar Mario 64* and *NIGHTS* for a sec and have him roview *Boand High* end *Dragon Hopper* for me? Pleaso?
6. The voice of GameFsn ts a loud one. If t scream loud enough in your megazine (not literally, of course), do you think Nintendo and its third psrties would hoar (end consider) my plea? .

Thanks tor your time.
James P. Mincoy

Daar James,
We to are perpioxed and somawhat disgustad over Nintando's treatment of this great hardware. It's as if, because a miiiion didn't fly off the sheives, thay abandoned it without aven giving it a chance. I could see if thoy had releasod a ton of hot software iika a Zelda, StarFox, Metroid, Killer, *or* Stunt Trax, *and then, if it stiii didn't saii, toking drastic measures, but kiiling it without oven trying was even worse than the 32X fiasco. To make matters worsa tha whoia mess cost 'am Gumpei Yokoi, one of the Nintendo eiite! How could they iat this happen? it's a shama ha'if never got to anjoy just how hot e machina bo designod. This sitaation also kills it for any other sach innovative 3D davicos that may have been in production. Rare was dasigning VB gamos but I beiiavo thoy've stopped. t doubt yoa'il soo anything from them. To answer yoar question about ports, weii, you couidn't reaiiy port a SNES gama on to the VB, howevar, a game aireody designed, drawn, balenced, and scored (these constitating most of the initiei work that goes into development) could ba convarted aasiiy, cost affactively and quickiy. Actueiiy some of the Virtual Boy game designs that got cancelled ore baing convortad to othar 32-bit consoies as wo speak. i have two VBs, one at home and one here in my little cave they caii an office. i play it eii the time and reaiiy dig it. If you must have gamos, contact yoar iocai vidoo gamo import store and have 'em order you* Speco Squesh *from Jepen. It's a hot, one-on-ono, 3D action game. i honestiy believe that had Nintendo property pubiicized the VB (we never got a grabbing VB to take screon shots or even 1 preview ROM) it would have reaiiy taken off. We offered to make a bimonthiy VB magezine, no strings affached in exchange for nothing more than e system to capture with, and were even looking into making the pages eppeer 3D, but Nintendo never responded. They just kiiled it. We'll review what iooks to be the iast two gamos,* Dragon-Hoppor *and* Bound High, *as soon as they're reieasod. Hoid on to yoar VB. There ware two games dispiayed at the iast two shows, a hot racer and an undorwatar* Ecco-iika *edventure that never sarfaced, there's also a ton of gamas on tha "anknown iist" in Japen. You naver know...*

Dear Postmeister,
I guess t make about tho tifth temale gamer to write to GameFsn. I've been playing video games since t wss tive, when I got my Nintendo for Christmes. Ton wonderful yeers with Nintendo, and t'm tinally making the switch to Ssturn this Christmss. My msin reeaon: no more SQUARE, no more RPGs. Well, anywsys, on with the questiona!
1. Postmaister, what'a with the Germsn?! I csn't understand a dern thing you're aaying, even after a year ot German!
2. Tskuht, t just heard e rumor that the *Lunar* remixes are being doleyed baceuse 1 and 2 are going to be packaged togethar and they aad *Lunar 3* are all going to coma out at the ssmo time. Hope it's true!
3. By tha way, do you guys know anything about e *Lanar* anime? How about *Final Fantasy*? Any wsy to order them, as thay're my two favorita RPGs (*Lunar* tor the humor, *Final Fantasy* tor the seriousness)?
4. Moonies of the world, uaite! We *Sailor Moon* tans aren't violent. Well, sometimes... My best triond and t ere like the only people in our school that reatly like *Sailor Moon*. Wa plan on dressing up like Scouts and going to a Coo. It's a bummer thst ao one's interested in the gamo. It looks maga-coof! ts the Jsponeso RPG any good?
5. No offense to anyono thst likos polygons or anything, but Tetsuya Nomura's art work sucks! I can't batieva thoy made Yoshitaka Amsno do backgrounds! His artwork is gorgeous! Tho man is a ganius! Did anyono ever see the box artwork tor *Vampire Hunter D*? Doos anyone know whore I can gei a poster of that?
6. Is Nintendo plonniag on haviag sny RPGs for the N64?
7. I agree with Alisoa Csppellieri. Femeia gemers are only now boing recognized as actually liking vidao gsmas. I think tho pon pal column is s greot idea. Probsbly work rosilly woll on the taternat. Don't daspsir Atlison, you can always buy o *Sailor Moon* import!
8. Does anyone ono know what *Lunar 3* is going to be about? I hear everyona's going to save the Blue Star. Are they going to clear up anything in the remixes?

9. This is more of an opinion than a question. Nintendo's such a pain in the butt! They never bring anything good over here, then I end up buying the import!
10. I love all your guys' Japanese game coverage. I love to know what's going on over there.
11. Takuhi has a great anime section and extremely good taste in anime. It's the first thing I turn to in the magazine. Please keep it around.
You guys definitely have the best gaming magazine in the industry. Never lose your quality and humor!

Ciao,
Nicole Kirk
New Port Richey, FL

Dear Nicole,
The recent trend (well, it's a mini-trend, at least) of female gamers and anime fans writing as is being immensely enjoyed by the entire staff. Your point of view and opinions are deeply appreciated. It gives us hope that someday we'll find love with someone that can play us in Street Fighter. *The German, oh, the German, was meant as a joke, Postmeister... meister. A friend of mine (I have some), Evil Lights, who's taking German, was down visiting and we thought it would be funny. DH told us he thought it was a dumb idea but he's the type that lets you sink yourself and then just sits back and watches you squirm. It was just a bunch of one-liners praising* Mario. *Now I'm getting letters from Germans about pronunciation... As for* Lunar 1 & 2 *being packed together, you can forget that one.* Lunar 3 *is on the drawing board but don't expect it until well in to next year, Japan time. GameArts is busy working on* Grandia, *their newest Saturn RPG,* Lunar 2, *and a mahjong game.* Lunar Silver Star Story *for the Sega is the original* Lunar *with completely redrawn graphics, 2 new main characters, an enhanced story and all new music. There's also 45 minutes of hot animation you won't believe (which is the closest you'll get to a* Lunar *anime). It comes out in Japan this October.* Lunar 2 (Eternal Blue) *is being done by GameArts (*Silver Star Story *is being done by Kadokawa Shoten) and features enhanced, (but not as much as* Silver Star's) *graphics and little else. It will be out (in Japan) before Christmas. I'm sure Working Designs is making preparations to bring them all out here as soon as humanly possible now that* RayEarth *is nearly finished.* RayEarth, *by the way, is an event in Sega Action/RPGs. The graphics, gameplay, story and especially the music are all amazing. I just hope the US voice is good.*
There is one four-volume Final Fantasy *anime, available in Japan. It takes place 1000 years after* FF5 *and has music by Nobuo Uematsu... and chocobos! Manga should jump on this one. Nintendo RPGs include* Zelda, *and uh,* Zelda. *I'm sure however, there will be many... in Japan. RPGs on the N64 will surely be glorious. And finally, if you and your friend must dress up in* Sailor Moon *gear, why not snap a photo and become immortalized in the pages of GameFan? Be sure to scream "Venus love and beauty shock!" The* Sailor Moon RPG *on the Super Famicom by the way, is a hurtin' experience. I'll work on the poster..*

Dear Postmeister,
I need the information please. I don't get it. Send me the information.
Jaime Hernandez, Covina CA
(I swear that's an actual letter. -Ed.)

Dear Jaime,
Agent Beelzabub-09A! It is good to hear from you. You have not shown at any of our contact points for several weeks. Also, do not use your real name in public correspondence such as this. The information you seek can be found at 46 Rue des Fontenioa, in Nice, south France. There you will meet a little old lady, who will take you to her family's "bakery." In the back room you'll find the microfiche. After retrieving the information, IMMEDIATELY EAT THE FILM. We trust you can complete the mission with efficiency. Remember, the fate of the entire Corporation now rests on your shoulders.

Dear Postmeister,
Hey there! It's Jen again. I'm glad to hear that Wolfinger's Wall is coming back; I've missed it sorely. As for being part of a "cult" that the majority of the vid-game world didn't know existed? Well, in a way, I do have to admit you're right; female fighting game fans are definitely a mere microbe of the gaming population (unfortunately). That might explain the funny looks I get in the arcade. It's rather annoying when you're trying to play *Alpha 2* and someone's looking at you like you're missing some major part of anatomy or something. Well, that's their problem. Anyhow, I've got a couple of questions I'm hoping you can answer. I'll be eternally grateful!
1. Is there, or will there be a Totoro video game? I've just recently seen the movie and grew quite attached to those lovable furballs.
2. Will Gallo be in *Street Fighter 3*? Please say "yes!" I'm already praying to the Capcom god every night!
3. Are Bienko and Guile hidden characters in *Alpha 2*? I've heard rumors about them, but haven't seen anything yet!
4. Is there any way I can contact Bengus and other Capcom artists to exalt them on their artwork, and possibly beg for a piece?
5. Could you do some coverage of the American *Street Fighter* cartoon in E-Fan or something? I really love that show; especially the episodes, "Strange Bedfellows" and "Channel Vision." The animation's awesome! I remember that report you did on the *EWJ* cartoon a bunch of issues back, and thought you did a real nice job with it, so I felt *SF* deserved such high honors, too.
6. Does GameFan have any sort of internship program or anything? 'Cause I know a while back you were offering positions on your staff and I would've really loved to apply for one, but I'm gonna be in college in the fall, so that would be rather difficult... But I was wondering if you had such a program for aspiring vid-game editors who are just out of college or looking to spend a summer as an intern? That would be really cool!
7. Whatever happened to that *SF: the Animated Movie* FMV game? I used to hear snippets of info about it, but haven't seen anymore of it for months! Is it still in production?
Well, that's it for now; but don't worry, I'll be back to hassle you for more cool info in the future! Oh, and by the way, thanks to you (for printing my letter any artwork), I've got an awesome pen-pal now! Say "Hi" to the rest of the GF staff for me! Until next time, may the force of the Flash Kick be with you!

The world's biggest Guile fan,
Jen Song

Dear Jen: As you can see I'm totally out of space! I'll have to mail you the answers this time. I had to print your letter though, we're getting a lot of mail about you. Is it the art or your friendly personality? (I'm sure it's probably both.)
P.S. The font was fine.
P.P.S. Check out Dallas and his Guile plea..

More Jen art!



Hmmm... I wonder if Jen Song would be interested in being pen pals with a bored gamer in Naples Italy? Please expose my address to the world, so that Jen might be kind enough to write me.
Dallas Ragon
U.S. Naval Hospital
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There ya go, Dallas!

Write to me or I'll run for President

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